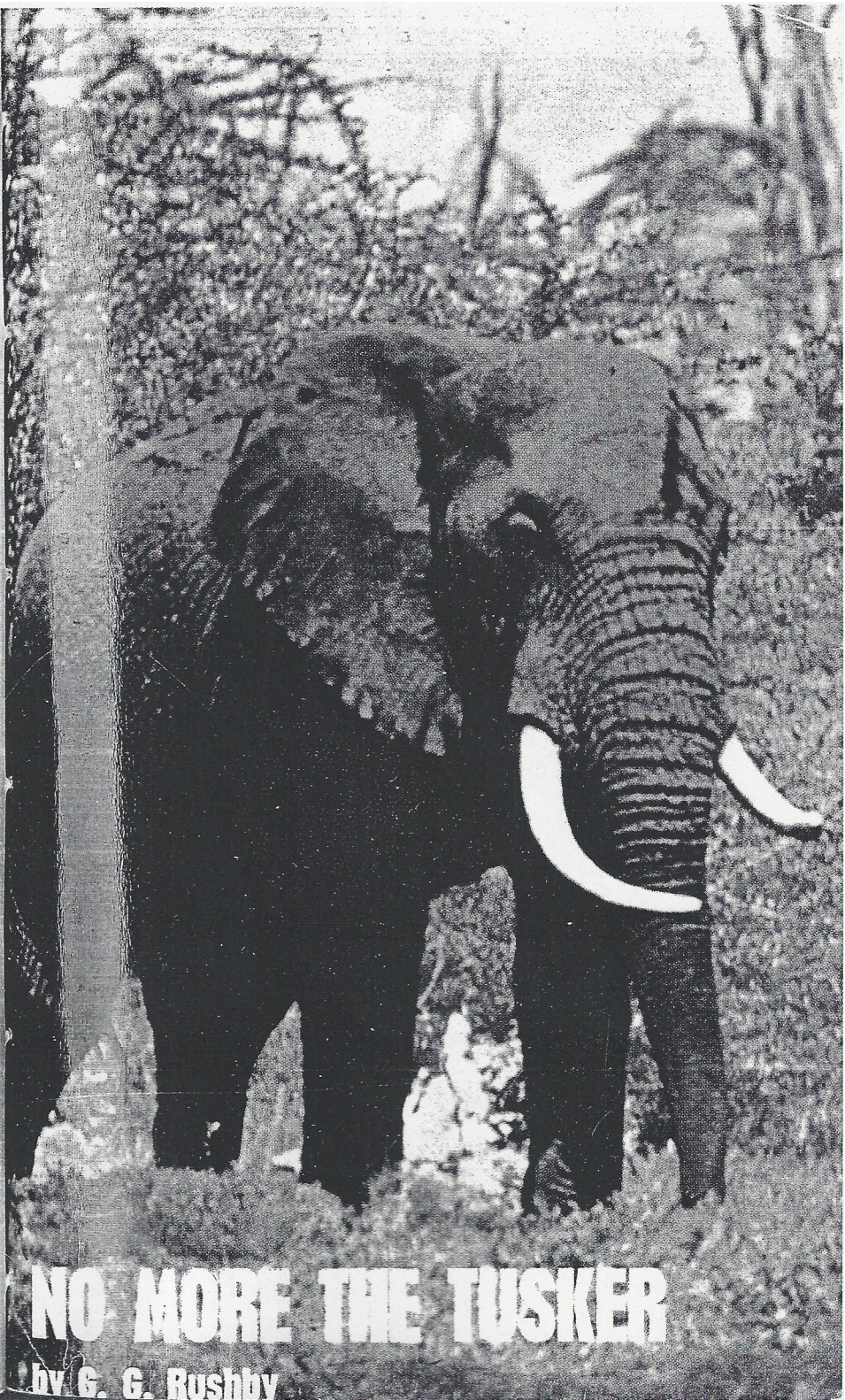

NO MORE THE TUSKER

by G. G. Rushby

No More The Tusker

G. G. RUSHBY

THIS FASCINATING CHRONICLE OF elephant hunting is by a man with adventure in his blood. He has been professional ivory hunter, coffee planter, and gold miner. He has encountered man-eating tigers and lions — the latter once ate over a thousand people in thirteen years. He was Deputy Game Warden of Tanganyika, and took Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands on a hunting safari.

He controlled what he considers to be the two best Game Reserves in the territory — Rungwa Reserve (where he found cave drawings), and Lake Rungwa Controlled Area with its marvellous bird life. It is one of the breeding grounds for flamingos and pelicans, with an abundance of hippo.

Mr. Rushby is closely concerned with the technicalities (and sometimes the mystique) of elephant hunting. He knows a great deal about elephant behaviour, the training of hunters, the types of weapon to choose, and the dramatic superstitions surrounding the profession. He tells of the great hunters of the past— some of whom pre-dated the earliest explorations in the territory, and at least two of whom are reputed to have reached Victoria Falls before Livingston.

He is no sentimentalist. He gives the facts, knowledgeably and entertainingly, and his story makes a real contribution to the work of the Game Reserves.

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G. G. Rushby

W. H. ALLEN
LONDON
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Introduction

This book is mainly about elephants, elephant hunting and elephant hunters. The names of nearly all the elephant hunters who operated during the early and mid-nineteenth century have been forgotten. The experiences and adventures of only a few of them were recorded. It is to those early professional ivory hunters, to those of later years, and to Captain James Sutherland in particular, whom I believe was the greatest of them all, I dedicate this book.

The following poem by Gullen Gouldsbury would be a suitable requiem for the dead profession of elephant hunting and the small happy band that followed it.

The Ring Fence

(In memory of a dead elephant hunter)

At first—in other worlds, it seemed—the wilderness was free,
A man might go where'er he dreamed nor pause to pay the fee,
Out of the herd might take his toll earned at the risk of death,
Wander afar beyond control caressed by Nature's breath—
The world was wide—the herds were strong, and killing was no sin,
No law but sportsmanship he knew—no Ring Fence hemmed him in.

And so, he trod the wider ways far from the city crowd
And threaded Nature's tropic maze, thinking his thoughts aloud,
Followed the herd from dawn to dusk and slept from dusk to dawn,
Pillowed upon a gleaming tusk in tangled wastes of thorn.
But those who frame the Laws of Men were plotting in his track
Till, east and west and south and north the Ring Fence turned him back.

Now, though the world is just as wide, though herds are still the same,
Though seas of grasses still divide before the rush of game,
From 'British East' to 'German West' from Congo to Karoo,
There is no gap to fail the test and let the hunter through,
'Thou shalt not kill the Elephant'—so runs the Law today—
'Hang up thy battered bandolier, the Ring-Fence bars the way.

Hang up thy battered bandolier and let the rifle rust,
For now the dreams of yesteryear and all they held in trust
Must take the place of strenuous days and starlit nights of old,
Of morning mists and noontide blaze and weariness and cold . . .
No more the Tusker of those dreams shall charge, with trunk encurled,
No more, at dawn, thou'lt pace the paths with dancing dew empearled. . . .
No more crouch low and test the wind . . . the Ring-Fence hems the world.

In my boyhood, and as a youth in England, I read all the books I could on big-game hunting and exploration in Africa. I was fascinated by the stories told by those early hunters and it was my ambition and determination to go to Africa. During 1920, and at the age of twenty, I was able to buy a steerage passage to Africa. I had very little money but eventually I was able to work my way to that part of Portuguese East Africa lying between the port of Beira and the Zambezi River.

It was in that area towards the end of 1921 that I began my hunting career, and during the early part of 1922 I killed my first elephant there. From then until 1930 I hunted elephants as a professional ivory hunter. I hunted them in Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Belgian Congo and the Ubangui Shari Chad and Moyen Congo regions of French Equatorial Africa. There was a world-

wide slump during 1929 and 1930 and the price of ivory fell so low that it was no longer possible to make a living at elephant hunting. For that reason I was forced to give up the profession.

During 1930 I took up virgin land in Mbeya District, Tanganyika and developed it into a coffee farm. Unfortunately world prices, including coffee, declined even further. During the long wait of five to six years between planting the coffee seed and harvesting the first crop, I tried my luck at alluvial gold-mining. This was on the Lupa Gold Fields situated some fifty miles from Mbeya. It was not a prosperous venture.

I also took out visiting sportsmen on hunting safaris and acted as 'white hunter'. To me this kind of work was distasteful. In the 1920's professional ivory hunters tended to look condescendingly on the white hunters and considered them little better than Cook's Guides. This was unfair as there were some excellent hunters among them. The average standard was high—much higher than the white hunters who operated during the 1950's. Visiting sportsmen were comparatively few, and the pay of the white hunter considerably less than from 1945-60, a period which was the hey-day of the profession.

In 1938 I joined the Tanganyika Game Department as a game ranger and was put in charge of the Eastern Province. There I had to build up an organisation to control the large numbers of elephants. An average of over one thousand were killed each year in the province and this had to be done to give reasonable protection to the crops of African peasants. Without elephant control, and to a lesser extent hippopotomus control, of which some five hundred were killed each year, the cultivation of food crops in the Eastern Province would have been impossible.

After six years of continuous elephant hunting, and training African game scouts as elephant hunters, I was transferred to Moshi in the Northern Province of Tanganyika. My Range consisted of Tanga Province and the Northern Province and included Ngorongoro Crater and the eastern half of the Serengeti Plains which was then a Game Reserve. There was a certain amount of elephant control in Tanga Province, and less in the Northern Province, but nothing like the scale of the Eastern Province. The work in that Range was mainly game preservation.

I was in Northern Province Range for one and a half years and then transferred to the Southern Highlands Province Range. My base was at Mbeya, the administrative headquarters of the province. On taking over the Mbeya Range my first task was to deal with the Njombe man-eating lions. Those lions first started killing and eating people in 1932. There is no doubt that the Njombe lions were the worst man-eating lions ever recorded in African history. It was one year and nine months after I started hunting the man-eaters before the last one was accounted for, and during this time I was away for six months on overseas leave. It was estimated that from 1932, when the man-eaters first started killing and eating people until the last lion was shot in July 1947, they killed and ate over one thousand five hundred people.

There were two excellent game areas within the Range. One was the Rungwa Game Reserve and the other Lake Rukwa Controlled Area with its marvellous bird life and large numbers of hippopotami. An average of some two hundred elephants had to be killed in the Range each year for crop protection. Although most of them were accounted for by game scouts I hunted a fair number every year.

At the end of 1948 I was promoted to senior game ranger and in early 1953 I was promoted to the post of deputy game warden of Tanganyika and had to go to Game Department headquarters at Tengeru near Arusha. My duties were now mainly administrative but I was able to get away occasionally on extended safaris. These safaris were made to inspect the different Ranges, and to give advice and guidance to the game rangers on any problems they had.

One pleasant interlude during this period, which enabled me to have a break from office routine, was when I accompanied Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands on his two hunting safaris to Tanganyika. I have never met better sportsmen than the Prince and the few friends he brought with him.

I promised myself I would give up elephant hunting at the age of forty-five, but on reaching that age I changed my mind and decided to continue until I was fifty. There used to be a saying among the old ivory hunters that if one hunted long enough, sooner or later the hunter will meet up with the elephant that has his name on it. By the time I was fifty-five my eyesight began to deteriorate and I found my rifle sights blurred. When the rifle was aligned on a target either the

foresight or the backsight was so indistinct that I could not aim with any degree of accuracy. I did not like the idea of wearing glasses while hunting, so I finally gave up elephant hunting.

For my last elephant I decided to take local leave and hunt for a big bull. Taking out a licence for two elephants I went to an area which I knew contained a few good bulls. Hunting out from a small hamlet for six days I was able to get up to three or four bulls but the biggest was only about fifty pounds each tusk so I did not shoot. I moved camp to another area about twenty miles away and the following morning around eight o'clock I cut the fresh spoor of two big bulls.

The freshness of the spoor indicated that if all went well I should catch up with the bulls within three or four hours. After following for an hour it was obvious, because of the tactics the bulls were using, that I would never get up to them at all if I continued on the spoor. The wind was blowing from north to south and those two cunning old bulls knew most of the answers to the game. The 'signs' on the spoor showed that they were moving fairly slowly and feeding as they went along, but they were wily enough to travel for about a mile with the wind on their sterns, veer into the cross-wind for about half a mile, then turn down wind again.

I knew the area fairly well, and one of the two local guides knew the country very well. After getting a clear description of distances and of the country that lay ahead we followed the elephants. When I judged we were as near to them as was safe we made a detour on a shallow arc to try and get in front of them. We travelled fast for about an hour and reached a large open treeless plain, some three miles long by one mile wide, which the guide had told me about.

We took up a position in suitable cover and kept a sharp look-out. After about half an hour we saw the two bulls. They were skirting the edge of the plain and coming down wind directly towards us. There was plenty of good cover in the way of open bush so I was able to move into position and wait for them on their direct line of approach. The bigger of the two was in the lead and as he was passing me at very close range and fully broadside on I dropped him with a brain shot. I turned to the second bull, which was following about fifteen yards behind the first, and saw him recovering from the peculiar recoiling action elephants often make when suddenly alarmed by a rifle report at

short range. As he turned to get away I shot him through the heart with the second barrel. The first bull had the heaviest tusks, just under one hundred pounds each and the tusks on the second were a little less than ninety pounds each.

So ended my elephant hunting career. It had covered a period of thirty-three years.

To me the elephant is the most sagacious of all the animals in Africa. For the hunter a bull elephant is the most worthy and satsifying quarry of any of the dangerous game animals. I was fortunate that my last hunt was successful and it was as thrilling as the hunting of my first elephant. In view of the large number of elephants I have killed it may sound paradoxical, or even hypocritical, if I say I always had a feeling of regret, even sadness, each time I examined the body of an elephant I had killed. It may have been due to the respect and admiration I have for this magnificent animal.

Unquestionably the elephant is the king of beasts in Africa. Although seldom agressive with other animals, they all, including the lion, make way for him. The only exception is the black rhino who occasionally tries to make trouble when in close contact with elephants. Perhaps this is to be expected from the black rhino for he is quite unpredictable and also the most stupid of animals.

CHAPTER ONE

The Social Life of Elephants

Throughout tropical Africa I found that wherever I hunted the social life and the family life of the savanna elephant were always the same. The African elephant has a more highly developed social system than any other African animal, except possibly the higher apes. Each elephant area in Africa which has not been overshot, or where elephants are not being continually harassed, is divided into sections. These sections or sub-areas are sharply defined and, broadly speaking, they are not necessarily divided by natural boundaries such as a river, a range of mountains or different vegetation, but by some mutual understanding amongst the elephants themselves. These sub-areas could be termed bull elephant country and herd country. An area occupied by the bulls could be two thousand five hundred to three thousand square miles and the adjoining area occupied by the herds would be very much larger.

In the herd country are found herds numbering anything from fifteen to fifty each, and every herd keeps to its own particular area. The Small herds will often temporarily join up with other small herds, although later they will leave again, and even small herds split into family groups for a period of time. The herds are fairly well balanced, consisting of cows, half-grown ones, calves, the master herd bull and one or two younger bulls. Normally a herd is led by the oldest cow or

a no-tusker. Herd country is always well watered, with a plentiful supply of food and shade. This is necessary, for calves and half-grown ones cannot stand hard travelling in hot weather to distant water. Neither can they go without water for the long periods fully grown male elephants do in normal life. During the hot dry season herds with calves will visit watering places three or four times a day, whereas a solitary big bull seldom goes for water more than once or twice in twenty-four hours.

Within the area one may term bull country live the big bulls. They move about singly, in twos or threes. Sometimes one finds a couple of big bulls accompanied by younger bulls, but a herd is rarely seen in these areas. Occasionally a big bull leaves his area, alone or in company with another big bull, and goes into herd country, staying with a herd sometimes for a few days. At other times they take a cow from the herd and stay alone with her in the herd country for a short time. I believe the master herd bull is the main breeding stallion, but the solitary bulls do visit the herds for breeding purposes. The permanent herd bulls do not appear to object to these visits. Several times I have followed up a solitary bull and he has joined up with a solitary cow. On other occasions, far away from any herd, I have come across a solitary cow, obviously waiting for a bull to turn up. It may sound ludicrous, but it is possible that these trysting places are prearranged, by elephants.

Family life within the herd is of absorbing interest to watch. The cow elephant generally makes a good mother and will readily attack if she thinks her calf is in any immediate danger. The very young calves are pink behind the ears and under their stomachs. The careful way in which a cow tends its young calf, and the interest shown in it by other female elephants, is but one way in which elephants show their affection for each other within the herd. The noise and commotion a calf makes if it is lost, or considers itself lost, sound as if pigs are being slaughtered. There are old-fashioned mother cows with an obviously disapproving look in their eyes as they watch a 'modern' mother's unruly calf, quite out of control, and at times driving its own mother to distraction. The old-fashioned mother stands no nonsense. Using her trunk, she spanks her child if it misbehaves, giving it a good hard smack in the spot where all disobedient young should be chastised.

Moving from one feeding area to another, or travelling down to water or perhaps going to some shady thicket to rest up during the mid-day heat, elephants travel sedately in line along some well beaten elephant path. One or two old cows plus a big no-tusker cow if there is one in the herd, usually lead the way. Behind them come the younger cows, guiding their small calves in front of them with their trunks. The main herd bull is generally somewhere near the centre of the herd, with young bulls bringing up the rear and one or two of them ranging on either side of the herd, as flankers. On occasion, when watching a herd moving, I have seen a cow take a small leafy branch in its trunk and use it to brush flies and midges off her calf.

Elephant paths are features of all elephant country, and the main paths are broad and smooth. Along some of them it is possible to travel on a motor-cycle at speed and for a considerable distance. Elephants show exceptional skill in the aligning of paths, particularly over hilly country. Many of Africa's main highways and railways over difficult country and mountain ranges follow the paths first engineeered by elephants. Indeed, it has very often been found that an elephant path over a mountain range is the only feasible route. I have noticed that elephant paths, when crossing the summit of a range of hills, seldom cross on the sky-line if the summit is clear of vegetation, but pass instead through a depression or valley which cuts the crest of the hills.

Migratory movements of elephants take place but these are entirely seasonal and mainly controlled by the drying up of water supplies, the burning of high grass lands in the dry season and by the ripening of food in other areas. These migratory movements are much more marked in herd country than in bull country.

There are some areas where herds are plentiful in the wet season but devoid of elephants at the height of the dry season. Again, areas which become flooded and marshy in the wet season are vacated by the herds. The reason for the first is because calves and young elephants must have a plentiful supply of water without having to travel long distances to obtain it, and the second because young calves cannot cope even with three foot of water for any length of time, particularly if there is soft mud underfoot.

I believe the myriads of mosquitoes which appear during the wet season in low-lying, flooded areas also contribute to the reason why

some herds move on to higher ground. Behind an elephant's ears, and in some of the underparts, the skin is thin and sensitive. and swarms of mosquitoes cause them acute discomfort. Elephants continually take dust or mud baths to protect themselves against biting insects.

The big bulls in their own country do not migrate to such an extent as do the herds. They will, however, leave large areas of evergreen forest which may be their favourite haunts in the dry season. In the wet season many of these forests swarm with a biting blind fly, and although these flies are easy to kill they have a painful bite and can suck almost as much blood as a tsetse fly. The rains also bring out swarms of the fierce siafu ant and they, plus the constant drip, drip of water from the trees, are probably contributing factors why bulls leave the evergreen forests during the greater part of the rainy season.

Apart from migratory movements, elephants will cover long distances to the salt licks. These licks are often in a cliff or the banks of a dry stream and the excavations by elephants to get at the salt-impregnated soil are sometimes quite large. Tusk marks in the side of an excavation caused by elephants sometimes gives indications of a good tusker or two in the area.

One of the most amazing sights I have ever seen was what might be termed a mustering of herds of elephants in a particular part of the country. I have twice seen this unforgettable spectacle and it is impossible to imagine a more impressive sight.

The first time was early in 1924 in the eastern Mweru Swamp, Northern Rhodesia. I was camped near the Belgian Congo border on a high ridge on the northern edge of the swamp. From this vantage point I had a perfect uninterrupted view over the whole of that section of the Mweru Swamp. The second time I saw it was during 1927 in the Ulanga Valley, Tanganyika. Again I was fortunate in getting a perfect and uninterrupted view, this time from the top of a high tree situated on the edge of the flooded Ulanga Valley through which flows the Kilombero River.

These two places are some five hundred miles apart, roughly on the same line of latitude, and in both places the rainy season was during the same period, lasting from November to March. The type of country in each case was much the same, being wide, swampy plains with high elephant grass, almost impassable on foot at that time of year. Both

gatherings took place at the same time of the year, about the end of March, which is towards the end of the rainy season.

The formation of the gatherings and the number of elephants taking part were almost identical. They covered an area some four to five miles long and about one and a half to two miles in breadth. Within this area were scattered complete herds, varying from fifteen to thirty in each herd, and they all moved forward slowly in the same direction. From my vantage points I was able to watch these two mighty assemblies through field-glasses for over two hours. To give an accurate count of the numbers involved was not possible as most of the calves and young could not be seen because of the high grass. I did, however, count the numbers in two or three of the herds and then counted the number of herds in sight and there could not have been less than six hundred elephants, probably more than seven hundred, in each gathering.

The herds were dotted about at roughly equal distances apart on both sides of the formation and leading in the centre was an enormous single bull. A short distance behind him were three or four very big bulls and further back down the centre of the formation were other big bulls in twos and threes. Flanking these on both sides were the herds and the young bulls in groups of threes and fours. Never in my life have I ever witnessed such a wonderful sight and both times I felt humble and grateful at having had the good fortune to see them.

I have often wondered what was the meaning of the gatherings and for what purpose. I saw them in different parts of Africa but it can be presumed they are a regular feature of the elephants' social life, although they may be held on rare occasions, possibly but once a year in each area. At the same time I am diffident about making any comment on their purpose. They may have been the beginning of a migration movement but I do not think so, as there are numbers of elephants in both areas all the year round. Also, if any of the herds had wished to move to fresh ground they would surely have done so when they felt like moving. Although there were elephants in those particular areas throughout the year ordinarily they never concentrated in such large numbers. Again, the formation of the herds and the grouping of the bulls in both gatherings was unusual and did not conform to the usual daily movements of elephants.

It is difficult to know what was the purpose of the gatherings but I personally think they were for the purpose of forming new herds. Up until that time the number of elephants shot in either area were small and possibly similar gatherings had occurred down the centuries. Whether such gatherings take place now or ever will do again in Tanganyika is doubtful, due to the unbalanced shooting of large numbers of elephants under elephant control, done in an aimless haphazard manner, and which has completely destroyed the social set up of elephants over a great part of that country.

The no-tuskers, male and female, always live with the herd. Most of them are born that way, as there is no vestige of a tusk socket in many of the skulls. A few lose their tusks through having them struck by lightning, damaged by fighting with another elephant, or by bullet wounds in the nerve of the tusk. Very often a no-tusker is the leader of a herd and a herd led by one should be treated with great respect. The no-tuskers are of uncertain temper and will charge on the slightest provocation and sometimes bring the herd charging with them.

They are great bullies within the herd and this may be because they are tuskless and suffer from an inferiority complex!

In the brachystegia woodlands elephants feed a lot on the foliage of those trees and will occasionally jab a tusk into the bark and lever it away from the tree. They will then take hold of the torn end with their trunks, tear off a long thin length of bark and chew it to extract the juices. They then spit out the bark. The droppings of elephants who have been chewing this bark are always dark red in colour.

I was once watching a herd of elephants feeding in the brachystegia type of woodland and with the herd was a no-tusker. Twice I saw this no-tusker sidle up to a young elephant as it drove one of its tusks into the bark to lever it away from the tree. The no-tusker, screaming loudly, butted the young elephant and drove it away from the tree. The no-tusker then took hold of the broken end of bark and stripping off a long length proceeded to chew it with obvious relish.

Apart from the no-tusker, the bullet-maddened and those with diseased ivory, elephants are placid and inoffensive where unmolested. Many times I have seen impala and baboons mixed up with a scattered herd of elephants, all feeding amicably, but they do not seem to be able to get along with the black rhino. They have no fear of other animals

and apart from lions, who on rare occasions have managed to kill a calf or a partly grown one, their only enemy is man.

The rogue elephant, however, who really means business, is a most formidable opponent and on his own ground is probably the most dangerous of all animals in Africa. He calculates and weighs the odds, and his capacity to absorb any number of bullets not placed in a vital spot, his great strength, courage, intelligence and speed, together with his ability to move as silently as a cat in types of country where a man, unless extremely careful, makes much noise, render him a doughty opponent. This kind of elephant when he kills invariably makes a thorough job of it. I have seen the remains of men trampled and tusked into a pulp, and one who was literally torn to pieces and the bits thrown far and wide. It would seem that the elephant is aware that it is by means of a rifle man inflicts death and pain, for often in these cases the elephant has smashed the rifle also.

The elephant's trunk is a most amazing structure, combining tremendous strength with great delicacy of touch. With it an elephant can pluck a single leaf or a small fruit from a cluster of foliage, remove the ash cleanly from a burnt grass stalk and convey it to its mouth, put a neat pack of clay over a bullet wound, tear down a large branch or tree, or shake a huge palm-tree to bring down the fruit. All food and water is carried to the mouth by the trunk. It is used in battle, in love-making and for testing the wind to forewarn them of danger.

The elephant has a large repertoire of sounds, many of which it produces by means of the trunk. One of several warning signals is caused by tapping the trunk on hard ground, which gives a sound similar to tapping a piece of rubber hose on a concrete surface. That signal always brings a herd to silence and the alert. On going to the place where they were they will have vanished, and in complete silence, although, prior to the warning signal the herd would have been noisily feeding.

Their repertoire of sounds includes single sounds similar to those produced by most wind instruments, including some of the choicer toots of the saxophone. The shrill, amplified, cornet-like blast followed by the staccato screams of an angry elephant in thick bush are hair-raising, even to those of long experience. If the screams are followed by an ominous rumbling sound and a crashing charge which pushes over

everything in the way death is near, particularly if a hunter is caught with an empty rifle. Only a cool head, strong nerves, rapid, accurate action and providence may get him clear.

A herd of elephants when feeding scatter to a certain extent, but not so much that they are out of touch with each other. When on the move they usually travel in a column, two or three abreast, with a few young bull elephants ranging some twenty to forty yards away on either flank. When alarmed they move off and adopt a more solid and fairly tight formation, with the herd bull in the centre and travelling at some seven to ten miles per hour.

The flankers and rearguard keep close to the herd but will wheel away to investigate anything that arouses their suspicions. Should one of these flankers spot the hunter, very often it will make a rush towards him. Sometimes these rushes are in the nature of a demonstration, and coming towards the hunter, fairly rapidly with its ears fully extended, the elephant reminds one of a ship in full sail. Such demonstrations can turn into a real charge and the hunter should be ready to take what action he may think fit.

The action of a herd when it is moving off rapidly after being alarmed is a fast shuffling movement. The feet are lifted only about two or three inches off the ground with a heel and toe action. Comparatively short steps are taken and this form of movement is most probably adopted to prevent injury to the calves which are inside the tight formation. Should the bigger elephants take a higher stepping action when travelling in this manner the calves would most certainly get seriously hurt. Even when a cow is charging, although she then lifts her feet slightly higher, the charge is more in the nature of a fast shuffling rush.

CHAPTER TWO

Bull Elephants

Even in the early 1920's a hunter had to spend much time searching for good elephant country where the big bulls had not been hunted to any great extent. Distances were great and the only mode of travel was on foot with head porters to carry the safari loads and supplies; a very pleasant way of travel it was too. There were not many Europeans in Tanganyika at that time, apart from the few Government officials, and a number of them hunted their two or three elephants each year to augment their meagre salaries. It was natural that they were extremely loathe to divulge any knowledge they may have had of good elephant areas where big ivory could be found.

To obtain information from Europeans in the Belgian Congo was even more difficult, for I never met a Belgian who had hunted elephants for sport and found only one who was a professional elephant hunter. African information was not only unreliable but would apply only to the immediate locality in which the African lived. It was easy enough to find areas where there were plenty of elephants all the year round but such areas, so readily found, were invariably full of herds with big bulls few and far between.

I think the main reason big bull elephants prefer to live alone is to get away from the herds. In their own country it is peaceful and they have the occasional companionship of other elderly bulls. There is

always much fuss, commotion and noise in a herd. Calves and half-grown ones are always playing games and acting the fool in general. They do not always show the respect and consideration due to a venerable patriarch.

Some of the older cows seem to resent the rare visits of an old bull to their herd. There will be much shrill trumpeting and sometimes the cows are so disrespectful as to give a visiting bull a vicious jab in his buttocks with their tusks. No wonder the old bulls prefer the quietness of their own country in the same way that many men with shrewish wives prefer the peace and quietness of their clubs.

Big bull elephants sometimes lie down to sleep during the heat of the day and I have come across them fast asleep, one or two snoring heavily. When rising they get on their forelegs first and if aroused by any suspicious noise or scent they are up and away very quickly and silently. In Game Reserves and other places where they are unmolested the big bulls lie down more frequently than is realised. I have never yet seen a cow elephant lying down nor have I come across signs of one having done so.

An interesting account of a bull elephant lying down was once given to me by a young Assistant District Commissioner named Eric Risley. It was in the Rufiji District, Tanganyika during the late 1930's. Risley was a keen hunter, an accurate observer and had a great affection for all game animals. One day while out hunting he came across a herd of elephants at mid-day having their siesta. The herd was in short grass country with a few big trees dotted about and conditions were perfect for observation purposes. Risley found an ideal spot and settled down to watch the elephants for as long as they remained there.

The herd numbered about fifteen and the elephants were in small groups of threes and fours, each group sheltering under a tree from the hot sun. The herd bull was a large animal and a single cow was resting with him under the same tree. Suddenly to Risley's surprise the bull lay down and the cow walked over and felt above his head with her trunk. She then turned, standing with her stern close to the bull's head, and slowly swished her tail as if keeping the flies from him. After about twenty minutes of this the cow moved away a short distance and relieved herself. She then returned, took up a similar position and continued with swishing the flies and midges from the

bull's head. Twenty minutes later the bull rose to his feet and shortly afterwards Risley left to return to his camp.

A casual observer watching a very big bull elephant may come to the conclusion that such animals are ungainly. This is far from being so and to see one making a hurried ascent of a steep hill, or travelling at speed along a narrow path, is a wonderful sight. The impression is one of enormous power, majestic strength and perfect balance. The foot action of a really big bull when he is making a full-blooded charge is quite different from the shuffling rush of a cow elephant. Many hunters have been charged by big bulls but generally in country where the feet cannot be seen or there may not be the few seconds to spare to note the elephant's action. On one occasion when I was charged by a very big bull the conditions for observing his action were perfect.

The charge was in evergreen forest with the trees fairly widely spaced and the floor of the forest devoid of all undergrowth and grass, He started the charge from about forty yards away and although the view of the lower half of his body was quite unimpeded, the upper half, including the head, was partly obscured by the lower foliage of the trees. I therefore had to wait until the upper part of his body and head were in the clear before attempting a shot. In those two or three fleeting seconds I watched the foot action of the bull and it was truly magnificent to see.

The front feet and legs were lifted fairly high and when one foreleg made its forward movement much of the sole of the foot could be seen. This was then followed by the movement of the other foreleg which was in turn swung backwards, raised fairly high and slightly outwards. The lower part of the leg below the knee splayed outwards and was bent to such an extent that a good portion of the sole of that foot could also be seen before it started its forward movement. When the forward thrust of the mighty foreleg came, exposing a large part of the sole of the great foot, measuring over five feet in circumference it could be likened to the driving pistons of some powerful engine. The head was held fairly high with the trunk curled inwards into its chest and although he was a huge bull there was nothing clumsy or ungainly about him. He moved with agility, much power, grace and rhythm. A Clydesdale or Shire horse running freely in a field at full speed has a

similar action but gives one a rather poor idea of what a big bull elephant looks like in full charge.

I was using a double ·577 cal. rifle at the time and the elephant was actually about five yards away when I fired. I was half squatted with my knees well bent and I took the brain shot. The bullet entered the head low down, passed through the brain and came out of the back part of the top of its head. This was an excellent example of the penetrative power of the ·577 cal. rifle at short range.

On receiving a bullet in the brain an elephant collapses on the spot and falls as fast as it is possible for its huge bulk to fall to the ground. But in this case, whether because the elephant was so near or my reflexes were working so fast, the elephant stopped in its stride and then appeared to subside slowly and gently to the ground. As is often the case with a frontal brain shot, the elephant fell dead on its stomach, the body resting upright and the head on the two tusks which had dug into the ground for four or five inches.

It is very rarely indeed that a big tusker bull will make an entirely unprovoked attack, and I can recall only one such experience. This occurred in March 1940 in the Morogoro District where I was carrying out elephant control work. Two days before the event I had killed five elephants in that area and it is possible that this may have been the cause of the charge. With three local men to act as guides and help with the tracking we were travelling along the gentle slope of a long flat-topped, hog-backed hill looking for the spoor of a raiding herd of elephants.

We moved across a steady wind which was blowing up the slope and suddenly I heard what I thought was a herd of buffalo stampeding. A second or so later there was no question as to what was causing the noise, there was terrific screaming and shrill trumpeting and a crashing of trees. I grabbed my rifle from one of the trackers as they prepared to run for it. One of them dived into a thorn bush and began to disappear with feet and elbows working hard.

The elephant came down the slope at great speed and dead in line. The grass was at its highest and this made all movement too slow if one had wished to try to get out of the way and take avoiding action. When he came into view at short range, his head was held high with the trunk extended and flaying about from side to side. It is seldom the

elephant charges in this fashion and this one was also making a lot of noise. To make the flaying action of the trunk more effective he was swinging his head quickly from side to side, making the frontal brain a difficult one. That shot I had to take, however, as owing to the high grass, I could not see his chest.

The heavy .577 cal. bullet hit him hard in the head, turning him slightly off his course and as he passed me I shot him through the heart with my second barrel. Even so his momentum was sufficient to carry him a further forty yards down the slope where he fell dead. Later I went back along his tracks to the spot where he had started the charge. It was the rainy season and from reading the 'signs', which it was easy to do as the ground was soft, he had first churned up some of the ground with his feet and then stamped a few times as if he had been working up a rate before starting the charge. The noise he had made while doing this was what I had mistaken for a small herd of buffalo stampeding. I strode out the distance and from where he started the charge to where we were at that moment, it was one hundred and eighty yards. His ivory was over seventy pounds each tusk, and although we examined the body very carefully we could find no signs of any old bullet wounds.

Another possible cause for that charge was that it was the full season for the wild mgongo fruit (*Selerocarya caffra*). This is a plum-like fruit, outwardly similar in appearance to the greengage, but with a larger stone and the fleshy part of the fruit rather thin and of a light yellow colour. The trees, which were plentiful in that area, bear heavily and in season the ground under them is carpeted with fruit.

Elephants will travel far to eat this fruit and the smell from over-ripe fruit they have trampled into the ground gives off a strong alcoholic or fermented smell. It was most noticeable, during this season of the year, that elephants feeding on the mgongo fruit were more aggressive and pugnacious than at other times of the year. I believe this seasonal aggressiveness was because they were tipsy from the fermenting fruit. Elsewhere in this book I have likened elephants in some ways to human beings, and some humans when tipsy want to quarrel and fight and I think this reaction applies to the elephant.

In May of that year at Nhese Village on the Ngerengere River in the Dar-es-Salaam District I had an encounter with a big bull elephant

whose actions were also hostile but in a different manner. Again I was on elephant control work and had gone to Nhese Village to deal with elephants that were causing considerable damage to local crops.

We followed the spoor of a small herd from the maize fields in which they had been feeding the previous night, and they took us in a wide circle. After following the spoor for over four hours the herd brought us back to within four hundred yards of the maize fields they had been raiding. They went into a large swampy plain known as a 'mbuga' of about two thousand acres in extent and covered with high cane grass (mteti) which was fourteen to sixteen feet high.

We went in after them and eventually I was able to close with the herd and killed two, dropping them side by side. The rest of the herd made off and I followed to see what they intended doing. After a few minutes the two local trackers caught up with me and I sent them up a high sausage tree which happened to be growing there. They saw the herd moving quickly through the high cane grass across the 'mbuga', away from the village and cultivation and eventually into dense bush on higher ground about a mile away. The two men in the tree kept up a running commentary in loud voices, keeping me informed on the herd's movements.

I was at the bottom of the tree and after the elephants were out of sight the two men descended, talking quite loudly about the morning's hunt. As they reached the bottom of the tree I caught a glimpse of a large elephant about twenty-five yards away. By signs and whispers I explained to the two trackers what I had seen and told them to get back to the dead elephants as quietly and quickly as possible.

I watched the visible part of the elephant's back which seemed to just fade away, and then I got a better view of him as he moved about ten yards nearer, but I was well hidden in the high grass. The elephant came to the other side of the deep swampy pool. He was a magnificent big bull with tusks weighing about eighty pounds each with the top of one tusk broken off. He moved as stealthily and as silently as a cat, stopping every two or three steps to listen and test the wind. On reaching the pool he began to skirt it to come round to my side, and without making the slightest noise he came to within fifteen yards of me.

Having no wish to shoot such a fine bull I slipped away along the well-beaten elephant path which the trackers had taken. On reaching

the two dead elephants I climbed on to the back of one of them to see if I could follow the movements of the big bull, but although I watched for some time he never came out of the high cane grass which was three or four feet higher than he was.

There is no doubt that the bull must have heard my shots, heard the rest of the eeplhants stampeding and the loud voices of the trackers up the tree. I have no doubt also that he was stalking me and had he located me and charged with that swift rush I should have had to kill him; it would have been foolish to try and frighten or turn such an elephant with a shot in the air. From personal experience I know that when a big bull locates you and really means business he is the most dangerous of all animals in Africa, and sometimes he will hunt you down like a dog.

Two months later, about six miles away from the same spot, a workman of the Public Works Department was returning home at night along a native footpath. As there was no moon the night was dark and he was alone and slightly drunk having attended a beer drink. His remains were found next morning near the footpath, the man having encountered an elephant on his way home. It had tusked and trampled him to death. From reliable reports the spoor was that of a single big elephant and in all probability it was the one which had stalked me in the swamp.

Of the many fine points that the African elephant possesses, the one which always impressed me most is the affection, comradeship and concern they show for others in the herd. A team spirit comes into play when the herd has a difficult obstacle to negotiate and when crossing a river the young are placed in the middle with the fully-grown ones on either flank, in the front and rear. It is pleasing to watch the way they help each other to climb up a steep bank out of a river bed. They will give each other a boost up the bank by one pushing with the head the stern of the one going up the bank. When climbing such steep river banks a young elephant will often take hold of the tail of the elephant in front with its trunk. I have never seen an elephant object to having its tail held in this manner. The leaders always pause at the top of any difficult bank to hold down a helping trunk to the next one coming up. Two or three will always stay at the top near the edge until the whole herd has safely made the ascent.

It is not uncommon for two or three of a herd to go to the assistance of a wounded and stricken comrade. I have witnessed this action a number of times, and on a few occasions it has amazed me how, although there was no sound beyond the report of the rifle, the elephants all knew immediately which one was in need of help. They get on either side of the wounded one, jamming him tightly between them, and help him along, supporting him with their trunks under his body. Another will be at the wounded one's stern with its trunk under the scrotum, the base or thick part of its trunk under the buttocks and its head in the buttocks.

Sometimes an elephant will take up a position just in front, and the wounded one will hang on to the tail of the leader with its trunk and so get further help. The herd never abandon or leave wounded comrades unless they themselves are being hard-pressed by the hunter and are unable to keep the wounded elephant going.

On occasion I have followed a herd taking away a wounded comrade and they have completely defeated me although I have followed them for two or three days. The main tactics they use to defeat the hunter, whom they undoubtedly know will probably be following on the spoor, demonstrates the elephants extraordinary intelligence. Following the spoor of a herd which keeps a compact formation and is holding to a steady line is, normally, not difficult to do but the hunter must show extra care and skill if he is to get another chance at the wounded elephant. For the herd will travel to an area which has been used a lot by other elephants with well-worn paths running in all directions. From there they go to another well-used area and again on to others. If the wounded elephant has recovered sufficiently to be able to travel on its own, or with less help from its comrades, it is in one of these well-used places that the wounded one, with a few companions to help him, will leave the herd and go singly down elephant paths which lead away from the line the main herd is taking.

The spot the wounded one and his helpers goes off is skilfully chosen, also the manner in which it is done. At the point of parting the spoor of the main herd will be broad and clear, tending to make the most diligent and skilful hunter overlook any slight trace where two or three elephants have left the main herd.

One herd of about twenty which succeeded in taking away its badly

hit herd bull I followed for three days, and at the end of that time there were not more than seven or eight elephants left. The others had slipped away in ones and twos, no doubt to rejoin the herd bull who by then was probably travelling in the opposite direction. Later, when the herd is satisfied there is no further pursuit, and if the bull is badly wounded, he will leave the herd and move around with one or two younger bulls in attendance until he has recovered.

An observer may watch herds of antelope, buffalo, a school of hippo, or the rarer greater and lesser kudu or sable, and although many of these animals have considerable beauty, after a short while one is ready to move away. Not so with elephants, for they are so interesting that one can watch them for hours without becoming bored. This is because the elephant is an individualist, with much character and intelligence and some of his actions are most expressive of what he is thinking. After many years of close contact with elephants it is possible to note the differences between individual elephants in any particular herd. They are as different in appearance and temperament as human beings are in any village or town in the world. There are tall ones, short ones, fat ones, serious ones and comedians.

CHAPTER THREE

Elephant Calves

WHILE on elephant control in the Morogoro District, Tanganyika, I witnessed a most touching example of courage and attachment elephants will so often show when one of their comrades is in difficulty or danger. Reports had been received of large numbers of elephants doing considerable damage to ripening crops at villages near the boundary of the Kilosa–Morogoro Districts and I went to the area to deal with the problem. Much havoc had been done to the standing crops and although the number of elephants had been exaggerated there were nevertheless many in the area. Strong action had to be taken to avoid a serious food shortage.

Two days were spent at the first village dealing with the raiding elephants and then I went on to the village of Doma, some fifteen miles away. That night the raiding elephants were in among the crops in force, despite the hideous noises made by the locals shouting and beating on tins and drums. Early the next morning I got on to the spoor of one of the several parties which had been in among the crops during the night, and by 9 a.m. I caught up with a small party of the raiders. There was much fresh spoor about, the grass was very high and thought this particular group probably consisted of just three mature cows and one half-grown elephant.

Working fast I killed the three full-grown cows and then went to

examine the bodies to make sure that they were dead. It was then that I was greatly shocked and surprised to find two fair sized calves that had been running with the dead cows. The calves were each about the same size and looked as if they might be partly if not fully weaned. The half-grown bull seemed dazed and did not appear to know what to do. The reason for this may have been a wound he had received in the buttocks, probably caused by a ·375 magnum bullet fired at close range passing through one of the cows.

Walking towards them I waved my hat and shouted in an attempt to drive them towards the main herd of about sixty strong which was in a valley about a mile away. The half-grown bull just stood there in a confused manner with trunk dangling and I was afraid I would have to destroy him. The two calves, much agitated and at first hesitant, then took control. One calf went alongside and the other went behind the wounded one, the calf behind pushing and the one alongside helping in exactly the same way as I had seen grown elephants helping and taking away a wounded comrade.

I followed behind at a trot, shouting and waving my hat, urging them on their way and they eventually joined the main herd. There is no doubt that the calves found foster mothers among the cows in the main herd.

Elephant calves, like the young of the other more intelligent animals, show interest in all kind of things. They are apt pupils and if a danger signal is given by a member of the herd the calves stand silently on the alert, raise their small trunks and test the wind exactly as the fully-grown ones do. Kipling was referring to the Indian elephant when he described the great curiosity shown by the 'Elephant Child', but the curiosity shown by the African elephant child is just as great.

The following experience I had with a small elephant calf shows how this curiosity is well developed; it also shows the intelligence they possess. I was working a herd of elephants late one afternoon in flat, fairly open burnt-off country in the Ulanga Valley, Mahenge District. There were about twenty elephants in the herd and they were moving steadily across the plain in a fairly open formation. As the herd was travelling across the prevailing wind, and also because of the lie of the country, the only feasible way of getting close enough was by going in

from the down-wind side. The main drawback to this line of approach was that there was little or no cover, also the timing had to be accurate so that I would be in position as the herd passed from left to right across my front. Anyway, I made the attempt and reached a low mound on which I squatted with a small scraggy bush as cover.

When the elephants were abreast of me they were directly up-wind of me but I had slightly miscalculated the line they were taking and they were nearer than I anticipated when they passed. The nearest one was a large cow who passed within nine or ten feet of me and with her was a very young calf with some pink skin still showing behind its ears and on the underparts. The cow stopped a few paces beyond me and the calf, which was between the cow and myself, walked up the flattish mound towards me. With the end of its very small, pinkish trunk it felt all over my chest, arms and face for a number of seconds. It then turned and ambled to its mother and blew into her mouth with its trunk as if trying to convey to her the smell of this strange thing it had found. The cow gave it a light cuff with her trunk and started to move on. The calf then put its trunk round one of the cow's front legs as if trying to halt her. The cow stopped and the calf suckled from one of the two teats that are situated between the two front legs.

This herd was given to raiding food crops in the area at night and I was supposed to deal with it. After that episode, however, I was unable to bring myself to shoot any of the herd, much to the disgust of the three locals I had for guides and who had been left some seventy-five yards back in good cover.

I do not think any hunter would deliberately shoot a cow elephant with a calf at heel, or any other animal for that matter. During the course of an elephant hunter's career there will be times when he will have no alternative but to shoot a cow elephant with a calf in order to protect his own life or that of his trackers. Although it was unavoidable each time I did such shooting it always caused me considerable distress.

One such occasion was in French Equatorial Africa. I had followed a small herd for two days and caught up with them late in the afternoon. After some manoeuvring in fairly thick bush I was able to kill the herd bull. Almost immediately after my shot a very big cow, with a calf at heel, located me and pressed home a most determined charge from close range. Due to the short distance between us and the thick bush it

was impossible for me to take avoiding action and I had no alternative but to kill her.

The calf stood perfectly still beside its fallen mother as I watched silently with a perturbed mind from about ten yards distance. It was a heavily-built calf, standing about four feet six inches at the shoulders, and upon seeing me when I made a movement forward it made a most determined rush at me. Trumpeting loudly and angrily it butted me heavily in the chest and knocked me flying. Before it could complete its follow-through rush I regained my feet and by dodging I was able to avoid easily its angry and determined charges.

I called on the two trackers, who were watching the proceedings with some amusement, to close in on the calf and catch it. By this means I was hoping we would be able to hold the calf and pacify it. This proved to be quite impossible and although the three of us were fit and strong we found it impossible to restrain the calf and we all received some hard knocks during the attempt. After some ten minutes rough-and-tumble we gave up the idea and I went to the dead cow to find she was in full milk. The porters had arrived by now and we all stood a short distance away watching. The calf returned to the dead cow, touching it now and again with its trunk and although it made a few tentative short rushes in our direction they were not driven home. It kept up an intermittent screaming and although the screams were loud and shrill, and must have carried for a considerable distance, they lacked the volume of similar screams made by a more mature elephant.

I was now in a quandary regarding the calf as I knew how difficult they were to rear, whether unweaned or partly weaned. As this was tsetse fly country there were no domestic animals and milk was unobtainable. Not only that, but we were some four days march from base camp where there was a supply of meal and the calf could have been cared for. A further difficulty was that I only had two or three tins of condensed milk at the base camp.

As it was now getting dark I decided to go back along our tracks for some distance and make camp hoping that the rest of the herd might have heard the screams of the calf and would return during the night to investigate. This was, of course, wishful thinking on my part but I could not think of any alternative. The following morning we returned to the dead elephant to find the calf lying dead beside its

mother. It is difficult to say what caused its death but one can well imagine what my feelings were.

Another unfortunate experience with a calf occured in the Bagamoyo District, Tanganyika, where I was hunting elephants under crop protection. As I have explained elsewhere we carried out balanced shooting, working on a ratio of females to males shot as far as it was possible to do so. With me on this particular hunt were Game Scout Koloko and three local men to act as guides and help with the tracking. Local guides were never given, nor did they expect, any reward for their services. They appreciated the fact that such shooting was for the protection of the crops of their village, plus the possibility of a large supply of free meat, and they also enjoyed the excitement of the hunt. Later in the village, after a successful hunt, the guides would be the centre of appreciative audiences, who listened attentatively to detailed accounts of the hunt. The majority of bush-dwelling Africans are very good indeed in telling such accounts. With all seated in the shade of a large tree they tell the story with much detail, and the description of the part taken by the guides themselves during the hunt is much embellished.

We left soon after dawn, following the spoor of a herd of elephants which had been ravaging crops during the night and whose tracks we picked up in the maize fields. As is usual with elephants that have fed well during the night on cultivated crops, this herd travelled steadily and without stopping to feed en route. The bush was mainly dense coastal thicket with small less dense areas here and there, but the elephants kept to the thicket.

About an hour before noon we heard them close ahead of us. Telling the local guides to stay where they were or go back some distance, Koloko and I approached the herd. When we reached the elephants we found they were not travelling but had opened out looking for a suitable spot for their mid-day siesta.

Moving in together Koloko and I closed with a small group and accounted for four of them, all of which were cows. The rest of the herd stampeded away from us, making a lot of noise as they burst their way through the dense thicket. A few moments later the three guides were at our heels and we stood listening to the herd crashing away. After the sounds had died down we listened intently for the sound

of movement of any elephant which might have stayed behind.

A minute or so later we went over to the dead elephants which lay a few yards apart in more open thicket. I stopped to examine the first one while Koloko and the guides went to examine the other three. Koloko reached the furthest dead elephant and was checking to see it really was dead when there came a scurrying sound from the dense thicket just beyond. Out of the thicket came a well built calf about five feet tall with well formed milk tusks protruding some four or five inches. The calf immediately made a determined charge at Koloko who threw up his rifle to shoot.

Shouting to him not to shoot I ran forward and as I came near the calf knocked him flying. It was following through in a determined manner obviously intending to inflict damage on the fallen Koloko when I arrived from the side and was able to give the calf a heavy soccer charge in the shoulder. This knocked it away from Koloko but it went on to charge one of the guides. The guide turned to run but after a few yards tripped and fell with the calf close behind him. The fallen guide could have received serious injuries if over-run by such a heavy calf so I had to shoot it.

A number of elephant calves have been taken live in similar circumstances to these and with time and circumstances permitting they are normally not difficult to pacify and soon become very tame. They are very difficult to rear, particularly if unweaned, and unless they are in the hands of an expert game handler the great majority of such captives usually die of gastric trouble, probably due to a wrong diet. Weaned, or partly weaned elephant calves, in some ways are like human children, inasmuch if they can obtain access to something succulent they like to eat, and if there is no one to restrain them they will gorge until they make themselves ill. Sometimes this can have fatal results, as happened to a very friendly elephant calf I had at Morogoro. Known to all the children in the area as 'Winnie' she died of a surfeit of green mangoes.

Considering the large number of elephants killed every year in Tanganyika on crop protection alone it was inevitable that cases of elephant calves being orphaned should arise. The Game Department staff responsible for elephant control were normally very careful with their shooting and it is surprising how few such cases did occur.

Even elephant cows sometimes mislay their calves, as occurred at a village in the Ulanga District. A herd of elephants had raided the crops of this village during the night and the next morning a calf was found wandering about quite close to the village. Surprisingly, the men of the village did not kill it in revenge for the damage done by the herd. After two or three days the calf was quite at home in the village and became a pet of the children. Other children from nearby villages would bring fruit and food for the calf and it was a great favourite. The men of the village were tolerant towards the calf and secretly proud that their village possessed such an animal.

The calf was given the name 'Kiberege' after the name of the administrative headquarters of the district and which means 'the fast traveller'. The only person in the village who objected to it were the housewives. They would lay out supplies of meal and grain on mats to dry in the sun. Kiberege, using much cunning, would approach these mats of food from a blind side and sometimes was able to help himself liberally before being discovered. He would then be chased through the village by an irate housewife beating him with a stick and hurling insults at him. The housewives anger really did not go very deep for because of the mischievous antics everyone had become very fond of him.

Kiberege lived at the village for over six weeks, but one night a herd of elephants raided the crops again and the next morning he was gone. The next day the men of the village searched the surrounding bush for him but without success. There can be no doubt that the calf heard, and probably smelled, the elephants while they were raiding and had joined them. Whether it was the herd Kiberege originally belonged to or another is not known as there were large numbers of elephants in that area.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Hunter's Life in the Bush

The problem of supplies often cropped up in out-of-the-way places, which were often the best hunting areas. Supplies often ran out, but it is surprising how it is possible to manage without what would be considered essentials in civilisation.

When one is settled in the area in which it is decided to hunt elephants it is most inadvisable to shoot other game, and very often in good elephant country other game is scarce. The report of a rifle or a shot-gun can, under certain conditions, carry a considerable distance and will disturb the elephants and they will move on, particularly the big tuskers. It is perfectly safe to use a ·22 cal. rifle for collecting the odd francolin or small antelope since the report from this rifle is negligible and does not carry far.

Elephant meat, either dried or fresh, provides a great deal of protein and a good supply of dried elephant meat was always kept on hand. I found that the best part of the elephant to eat was meat cut from the temple. The amount of meat to be had from an elephant's temple is considerable, it has a fine grain, tastes similar to beef, and is good eating. It should be cut out as soon as possible after the elephant has been killed otherwise it acquires a musky flavour which is not pleasant. The meat from the trunk of perhaps one elephant in ten when slow roasted and eaten cold is delicious, and the flavour is a mixture of cold pressed

tongue and cold beef. The meat from the trunks of the other nine elephants is as tough as a piece of lorry tyre. Some hunters spoke highly of the heart but I found it tasted like the heart of any other animal and has a flavour I do not care for.

The meat was cut into strips and either dried in the sun in the form of biltong, or smoke dried on racks over a slow fire. At the base camp there was a smoke rack with a rough thatched roof over it and the strips of dried meat were placed in baskets made of palm fronds or other suitable material with a very open weave. These baskets of dried meats remained on the smoke rack and one or two logs were kept continually smouldering underneath. A goodly stock of dried meat was always kept on hand and so one's meat supply was always assured.

It does happen sometimes that supplies of flour or meal run out, and possibly it is the off season for wild yams and other edible roots or they may not grow in the area. This will mean a diet of meat plus honey and a few wild fruits. A straight meat diet is most unsatisfactory and not sustaining. One can consume a huge meal of meat, either fresh or dried, and within three or four hours become hungry again. After three or four days of this diet it is impossible to stand up to a full day's hunting and there is stomach trouble with diarrhoea and griping.

I found ground-nuts to be the most sustaining of all food when actually out hunting. Carrying a huge handful of these nuts in my pocket I would munch a few now and again as I went along and it was surprising how fresh one was after following elephants for ten hours or longer, even when the going was bad.

Honey is also a valuable food, readily obtained in the African bush, and some of the hives contain quite a large amount of honey. It is used to replace sugar and although it takes a little time to get used to honey to sweeten tea, after using it for some months and then returning to sugar in tea it will be found that honey has a better sweetening quality. It is usually eaten in the comb and after chewing a piece and swallowing the honey the wax is spat out and retained to be later melted down into blocks. Some of the combs contain a maggot like young bees and the taste, when acquired, is pleasant. If one has slight nausea after eating too much honey on an empty stomach a piece of comb containing young bees well chewed will stop the nausea immediately. Supplies of paraffin and candles sometimes run out and a workable makeshift is a

candle made from beeswax, or the wax is used in a shallow open dish with a floating wick. It gives a poor light but it is a light and there is always the camp fire.

Soap made from hippopotamus fat and caustic soda is excellent. When used regularly it seems to have as good if not better effect than a disinfectant on scratches and cuts which are apt to turn septic in the tropics.

There are several substitutes for matches and the most common is a burning glass which should always be part of one's equipment. It has its limitations, of course, and is no use in cloudy weather. One method by which the means to make fire is always at hand is to use a six-foot plaited rope about one and a half inches thick made from the inner bark of the brachystegia tree (miombo). When dried out this rope will slowly smoulder day and night and is easily carried by a porter along with his other load. By placing the glowing end under a small pile of twigs a fire is quickly made.

A flint and steel is also sometimes used but with this method it is necessary to have a suitable type of tinder. The steel can be readily made by an African village blacksmith and the best shape is in the form of a knuckle-duster. The best tinder is the flower of a kind of wild cotton. The flower is made up of fine silk-like fronds that are impermeable to water and these are collected and stored during the flowering season. This type of tinder is also used when sticks are employed to make fire. A pointed pencil-like stick is used, the point fits into a small hollow of corresponding size in a heavy piece of hard wood. One man rotates the pencil-like stick rapidly between the palms of his hands while the other keeps the tinder close to the point of friction. When a thin wisp of smoke appears one man blows gently on the tinder and in a short time it will be smouldering away and ready to use to make fire.

Native tobacco is readily obtainable in most parts of Africa and nearly every African has his plot of tobacco plants. When the leaves are mature they are spread on mats and dried in the sun and no other form of curing is done. When the leaves are thoroughly dry and there are sufficient of them, they are damped slightly, then twisted into a three-strand rope about two and a half inches thick, then into a tight coil some twelve inches in diameter. This tobacco is rather powerful and the best way to prepare it is to cut about nine inches of the coil into

small pieces, place in a bowl and pour hot water over it. It is stirred well and the liquor poured off. More hot water is poured on, together with two or three cups of honey. It is thoroughly stirred and allowed to stand for five minutes and then poured off. The coarse cut tobacco, after drying, is then ready for use and sometimes a very good smoking tobacco is obtained. It does vary a lot though, but at its worst it satisfies the desire a smoker has for a pipe. Dry elephant dung may also be smoked in a pipe and this varies from season to season in colour, texture and flavour but is not recommended.

I never took alcoholic drink into the bush although I am not a tee-totaler. Drink is not necessary in the bush, at least not until a man is thirty-five years or over. When I was over forty, and hunting elephants for the Game Department of Tanganyika on a considerable scale, I found it advisable to take whisky or brandy with me, but I used it sparingly. After a full day of tough going, leaving camp at dawn and often returning after dark, the leg muscles and bones ached so much that it was more restful to stand than to sit or lie down. It was then that I found a good tot of whisky helpful and the best way to take it was in half a fully ripe paw-paw. The whisky was stirred into the fruit and eaten as a fruit cocktail. Shortly after eating this one began to relax. Then came a good soak in a hot bath, followed by a second whisky in front of the camp fire. One was then ready to eat and enjoy the main meal, possibly the first meal of the day.

I found tea was the most refreshing of all drinks in the tropics and to be without tea was, for me, a definite hardship. Coffee was not a substitute, and imitation coffee made from oven roasted maize even less so.

Sun helmets and double Terai hats were the order of the day until the early 1940's. Nowadays Europeans wear light hats or no hats at all and scoff at the old order. It must be remembered that in earlier days there was only quinine as a prophylactic and treatment for malaria, and it was not as effective as modern anti-malarial drugs. The result was that a majority of Europeans had suppressed malaria in some form or other in their systems and exposure to the hot sun made one ill and adequate head covering was a help. Even so I think it is advisable to wear a hat of some description if in the sun for any length of time.

It was essential to have the ability to handle Africans, sometimes

under difficult circumstances when failure to control trouble could have had serious consequences. On occasions extremely strong measures had to be taken. Europeans vary greatly in their ability to handle Africans, indeed some are quite incapable of doing so although they may be extremely efficient at handling men of their own race. Others find no difficulty at all and it would appear to be a gift rather than an acquired talent.

Methods of hunting elephants varied according to conditions and type of country. In country which was sparsely populated, such as French Equatorial Africa and parts of the Belgian Congo, I found the most successful way was to employ fifteen or more permanent porters and hunt out from a base camp. If it appeared likely that I would be hunting in an area for some time, say six months or longer, a pleasant site for a base camp would be chosen. Preferably the site would be near sweet water so that a vegetable garden could be started. A fireproof ivory store was built in the form of a solid building of poles completely covered in clay mud with a ceiling of strong poles coated with thick mud on top. Covering this building, but built on a separate framework of poles, was a light thatch to keep off rain. If the thatch caught fire and the burning framework and grass fell on top of the store the clay-covered ceiling prevented the fire reaching the ivory. Elephant ivory burns readily, particularly when fresh.

Huts are built for the men and a cool 'banda' for oneself. The usual type of 'banda' is a pole frame structure with a good thatch, about twenty to twenty-five feet long and fourteen to fifteen feet wide. A small section at one end was totally enclosed with a doorway leading to the front section. The walls were made of cane grass (mateti) and the larger section, the living quarters, had low walls of cane grass about three feet high. The low walls allowed any cool breezes to pass through and at the same time gave an unrestricted view of the countryside. Stores and any surplus articles would be left in charge of a few spare porters at the base camp.

The only books I had for a number of years were the Bible, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Scott's *Marmion* and I found this an adequate library. When equipment has to be kept down to absolute essentials it is not possible to carry more than two or three books, and although I am not particularly religious I found the Bible the most satisfying of

all for continuous reading. Lack of reading matter, and being completely out of touch with the outside world, are not necessarily any hardship, for in the bush there are many things to see and observe. Even small things such as ants on their eternal search for food.

A foraging ant comes across a piece of food and after examining it he sets off to look for others of his kind. On meeting one or two the information is passed on by some means and there is considerable agitation among them and a great scurrying about to collect further ants. The finder seems to leave a trail of some kind after finding the food and going in search of help, because the alerted ants find the trail and then travel along it to the source of supply. There they carefully examine it and get into position to move it away. Some collect around the edges and others underneath, and with a concerted effort they start to haul the piece of food away. If it is too heavy for the number of ants present, messengers are sent off to search for and bring back more. Eventually the food is dragged off in triumph to an underground nest; the organisation would do credit to a higher form of life.

To absorb the feeling of mystery of the African bush it is necessary to travel alone through the bush for several days. It is better to make the journey in the dry season after the grass has been burned, for it is much easier to travel then and to see more of the country and the game animals. Such a journey should take several days and being alone in the bush one comes very close to nature. Travelling in this manner it is possible to obtain a partial insight into the mentality and nature of the bush-dwelling African peasant. The important thing is not to hurry. The pace must be easy and smooth, a pace which can be kept up all day, and for several days without becoming exhausted. In this way more ground will be covered and it is less tiring. Also, less body moisture will be lost through perspiration, and if the journey is through country where water is scarce this is an important consideration. Much patience is required. It is no use becoming annoyed and trying to force a way though swamps or dense thicket; it is better to make a detour, even if it takes an hour or two longer. In the bush it is necessary to be phlegmatic and accept the inevitable.

When I was in the Tanganyika Game Department I made several solitary journeys. My favourite safari of this kind was from the upper waters of the Rungwa River, Mbeya District to the Great Ruaha River,

Iringa District. The whole journey was through the uninhabited part of the Rungwa Game Reserve, and I made the safari three times, twice west to east and once in the opposite direction. My truck used to leave me at the upper waters of the Rungwa River and the driver and servant would drive off to await me at a point where I would come out of the Game Reserve. Their journey was some four hundred miles, for there were no direct motor roads, and the country is impassable in places, even for a land-Rover. There were no footpaths through the area, just the occasional well used elephant path.

My equipment was a 7-mm. rifle and ten rounds of soft nosed and five rounds of solid ammunition, a small rucksack containing strips of dried game meat, hard flour biscuits, ground-nuts, matches, burning-glass, a small cartridge-size container of potash of permanganate and a small lance for snake bites or cuts, a spare pair of socks, small light woollen blanket, anti-malarial pills, a water-bottle and a large double-edged sheath-knife.

To make such solitary journeys was a wonderful experience for all the big game animals, particularly elephant and buffalo, were plentiful in the area. I constantly had to make way for them or they for me. I was always aware of the amount of water left in the bottle for failure to make the permanent water holes, few and far between and not always marked by a landmark, could result in considerable hardship.

Most people who live continuously in the bush acquire the habit of sleeping lightly. Some sleep lighter than others but this seldom if ever applies to the African, who sleeps very heavily indeed. So heavily, in fact, that at times they appear to be drugged. Sleeping lightly is I think, more refreshing than heavy sleeping and my own light sleep gave me all the rest I required.

My sleep was so light, in fact, that the slightest unusual sound awakened me. Sometimes a kind of extra sense came into play, and although there may not have been any unusual sound I awoke knowing full well that some animal was in the immediate vicinity. I then built up my small camp fire and lay listening. More often than not no sounds were heard, apart from the usual night noises of insects or the call of a busy baby or night bird. At other times I would hear an animal moving or perhaps the alarm call of a bird, a monkey, a baboon or a bushbuck, indicating that an animal of some kind was on the move.

Two of the many times this extra sense caused me to wake at night, remain vivid in my memory. The first was in French Equatorial Africa. We had followed the spoor of three bull elephants all day and as the spoor was not too fresh there was not much chance of getting up to them that day. By travelling as hard as we could we made considerable gain on the elephants, and when we stopped just before dark to make camp, there seemed a fair chance of catching up with them the next day. There was very little firewood about and it was late and too dark to search for any so we had only two small camp fires on which to cook our meagre evening meal. Immediately afterwards we all turned in and I slept soundly.

At about 1 a.m. I awoke and lay silently listening. My camp fire was out. After listening for about ten minutes I became more alert with a feeling of tenseness. I sat up, took one of my rifles across my knees and pushed the safety-catch to 'off'. Two or three minutes later I heard the sound of a light animal moving slowly through the burned grass stalks. It was coming towards me. Having slept in shorts and vest I slipped the sheath hunting knife, which lay by my side, on to my belt and buckled it. Remaining seated I placed my rifle across my thighs pointing in the direction of the animal. From the sound of its movement it was fairly obvious that it was one of the big cats.

It was a moonless, pitch-black night and so dark that I could not see a thing. When the animal got to within what later proved to be nine feet, it stopped and there was deathly silence. This silence seemed to last for a very long time but was probably not more than a minute. The animal then turned and began to move slowly at right angles to its original line. It moved parallel to my grass bed, in the direction in which my feet were pointing and as it moved the direction of my rifle barrel also moved. After travelling some twenty feet in this direction it veered back towards its original line and a few moments later I was in no doubt as to what kind of animal it was. There came the wood-sawing, grunting gasp of a leopard. The call was kept up at intervals as the animal went on its way. I think the call of the leopard the most sinister of all wild animal calls and it fits perfectly this well designed and well equipped killer.

When in close contact with danger it is remarkable how one has a feeling of complete detachment, as if one is apart from and outside

what is actually taking place. The leopard kept up its rasping grunts at intervals as it moved off and when the grunts became more distant I went to sleep. The next morning I examined the spoor and it was that of an exceptionally large leopard. None of my men had been aroused by it. When I called them over to show them the spoor and how near it had come to where I had been lying on the ground they showed interest but little concern. To them, with their fatalistic outlook on life in the bush, it was just another episode. As one of the men said to me, 'Your day has not yet come.' That phrase was used fairly often, either in respect of a person who had been in danger or an elephant I had failed to account for. The opposite expression, 'His day has finished', would sometimes be used when a person was killed or a big old bull elephant was killed in certain circumstances. The matter would be left at that without further thought.

Another time when this extra sense of awareness woke me at night was during one of my solitary journeys through the Rungwa Game Reserve. When travelling through a Game Reserve, particularly one that carries a large elephant population, it is always advisable to camp well away from any isolated watering place. The noise made by herds of large animals at the water hole will otherwise allow one little sleep during the night. The water hole I reached on this journey was fairly large, holding plenty of water, but was isolated and some twenty miles from the next hole. I reached it late in the day and after drinking and filling my water-bottle the sun was beginning to set so I was only able to go about a quarter-mile further. By the time I had selected a place to sleep and collected a supply of firewood it was almost dark.

Using my sheath-knife I removed a few tussock-like clumps of burned grass and started my camp fire. After wiping my rifle with a lightly oiled rag I sat on my blanket by the fire and lit my pipe. By then it was quite dark. Moving away from the circle of the firelight it was possible to see a short distance because of the bright starlight but visibility was not good. My pipe was about half finished when I heard an elephant herd approaching. They were heading for the water hole and I was, more or less, in the direct line of their approach. I built up the fire but did not feel perturbed although they were coming towards me down wind.

The herd was a noisy one. There was much stomach rumbling,

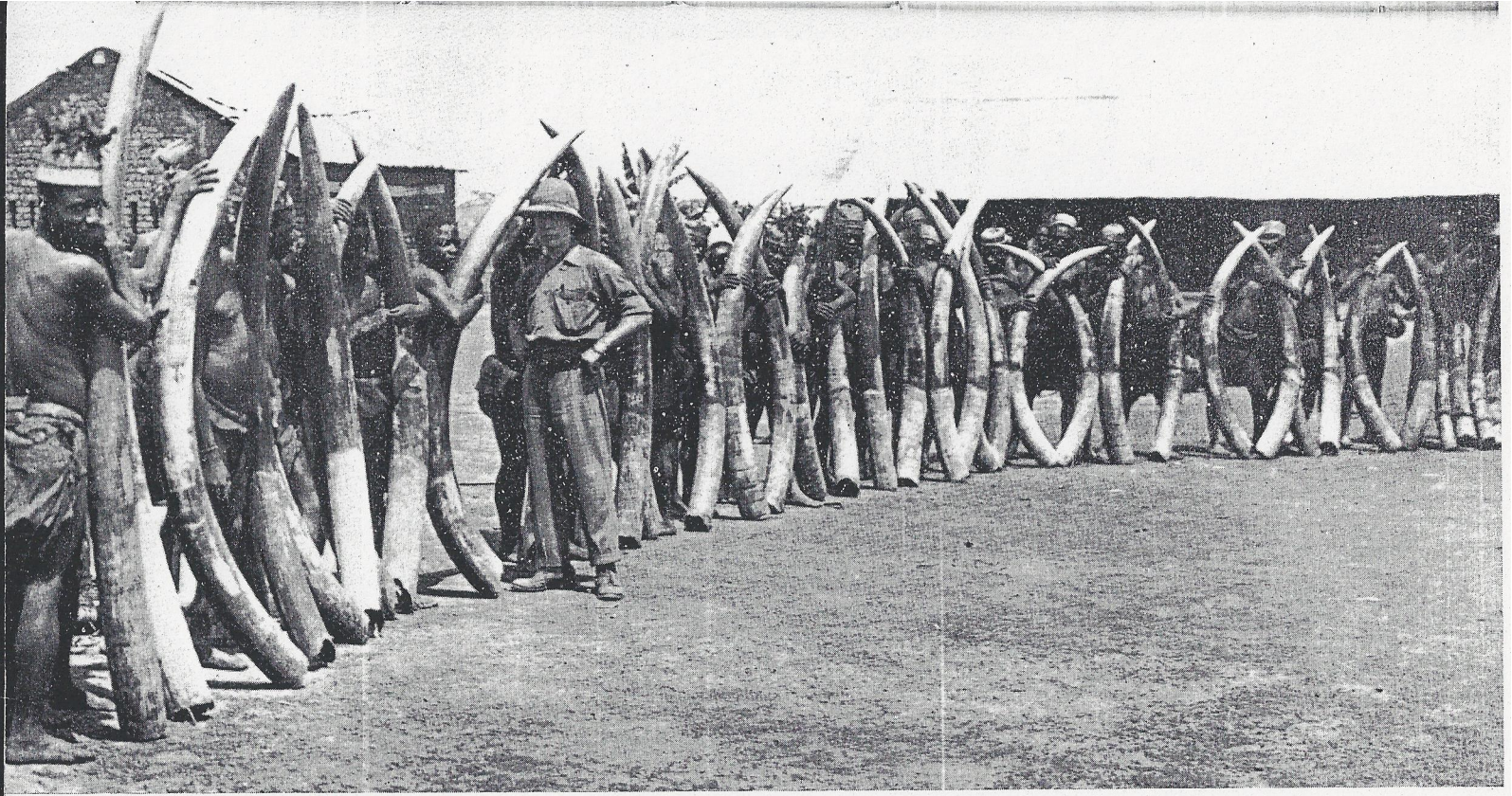
squeals from the young and an occasional trumpeting from a cow. Now and again a branch of a tree was broken off with a loud crack, which always sounds louder at night. The herd approached fairly quickly through the open miombo (brachystegia) woodland until the leaders reached to within thirty yards of my camp.

Two or three loud warning rumbles came from a couple of elephants who had spotted my fire and after a certain amount of shuffling there was silence for about a minute. Then, making little noise considering the size of the herd, they made a short detour around my camp and went on to the water hole. They made a lot of noise fooling about, squelching and gurgling over their drinking and bathing. By the time they had finished I had eaten my meagre evening meal and almost ended my final pipe of the day. The herd moved on beyond the water hole, travelling away from me, and as the sound of the occasional breaking of a branch grew fainter I got under my blanket and went to sleep.

At about 2 a.m. I was sound asleep yet a second later I was fully awake and alert. I sat up slowly, listening carefully then added firewood to the fire and blew it into a flame. There was a slight movement to my right front but the sound was so slight that it could have been a small rodent. I took my 7-mm. rifle, which seemed woefully small and inadequate in the dark, slipped off the safety-catch and sat listening with my mouth open. I am sure one hears better if the mouth is open.

After listening for a few minutes there came a sound which, although it was near enough to cause me some apprehension, nevertheless brought a smile to my face. The sound was that of an elephant relieving itself and each dropping of a large elephant is of considerable size, measuring some ten inches in length and six inches or more in diameter. There are usually four droppings released, with a pause between each one. I heard each fall on the ground with a plomp and a slight squelching sound which told me that the elephant was very close.

A few moments later there came a gentle sound of scuffling feet and the elephant urinated. Bull elephants can urinate when on the move but very seldom do so unless they are greatly alarmed and travelling fast to get away from danger. Normally it is a stately and majestic process. The bull straddles his hind legs and a part of the scrotum is lowered several inches. This may be the testes which are lowered for they are



(*Above*) The author. (*Below*) A type of sluice-box as used in the early days on the Lupa Gold Field to extract alluvial gold.

abdominal. The penis is then protruded from its sheath some two to three feet and the bull urinates. The penis is then retracted into the sheath and the large bulge between the hind legs withdrawn into the abdomen.

The bull, having finished relieving himself, moved on, making a short detour round my camp. He moved almost silently, making hardly any sound at all, and went off in the direction from which the large herd had come. After he had covered some forty yards he broke off a branch of a miombo tree, with a crack like a rifle shot, and then made a very loud rumbling noise as if saying good night. On examining the spoor next morning I found that he had stood and relieved himself ten yards from where I had sat.

Getting up at dawn the next morning it did not take me long to prepare for the day's journey. All I had to do was to buckle my belt, put on my boots, hat and rucksack, pick up my rifle and I was ready. Soon after dawn I was on my way and found that the night visitor to my camp was headed in the direction in which I was travelling and that he had a very big spoor. At about 7 a.m. I came up with him. He was a magnificent bull with tusks weighing about a hundred and thirty pounds each. He was meandering along slowly with lengthy stops to feed on the green miombo foliage. I watched him for some minutes from about forty yards range and then called out a few friendly words of abuse and greeting as I moved off. It was probably coincidence but at that moment he gave a more vigorous flap of his ears and an upward curl of his trunk as if to acknowledge my greeting.

It is possible of course that some sound in the night awakened me on both occasions but I do not think so. To have called out, at what may be termed the critical moment, to have frightened the animals away could have had disastrous results. There are cases on record when animals have attacked on being suddenly startled.

What may be thought to be a small matter impressed me greatly one night when I lay on my blanket listening for the movement of some animal. The moon was nearly full and overhead, giving sufficient light to enable one to read large print. As I lay looking up at the moon a large bird flying very high came into the large ring of light given off by the moon. Flying steadily with an easy action in a north to south direction it crossed from one edge of the circle of moonlight to the

opposite edge and passed across the dead centre of the moon itself. It took the bird a full minute to cross the circle of moonlight and into what was darkness from my angle of vision. What species of bird it was I do not know. It may have been a European stork as it was the season for migration from Europe to Africa.

Another small thing which fixed itself deeply in my mind occurred in the Upper Ubangui in 1927. We had followed a big bull all day and made camp on his spoor just before sundown. Having eaten my evening meal I sat by the fire smoking a final pipe before turning in. I walked a short distance from the camp fire and happened to look up at the moon which was then a few days old. The sky was free of clouds and the moon, tilted slightly on its back, was shining bright and clear. Within the arc of the young moon and equidistant between the two horns lay the Star Venus. Venus was twinkling brilliantly and the spectacle looked like a brightly illuminated replica of the Star and Crescent of the old Turkish Empire. My knowledge of astronomy is negligible and I have no idea how often such a union of Venus and a young moon occurs but I had never seen the phenomenon before nor have I seen it since.

CHAPTER FIVE

Hunting Elephants

One of the most important things to have when hunting is comfortable footwear. I found stout but light ankle boots better than low shoes. Walking all day in low shoes can cause the feet to swell and do not protect the instep from tough cutting grass as do ankle boots. Until the feet have toughened up the wearing of two pairs of socks do much to prevent blisters. Crepe rubber soles are not recommended. Although they are silent when walking, and grip well on dry and wet grass, on muddy or wet clay ground it is impossible to keep one's footing. Ordinary leather soles are slippery on dry grass and iron studs do not stay in the soles for long. Due to heat the studs expand, then contract and soon pull out. I found the best soles to be those made of a hard rubber compound with moulded studs. They are hard wearing and reasonably silent. It is a good plan to have the tracker carry a pair of gym shoes in a haversack along with the spare ammunition. On getting near to the elephants, and if there is time, changing into gym shoes is not only refreshing but it is possible to move more silently.

The right kind of clothing is of utmost importance and, naturally, individual choice will vary. I wore shorts, stout, light ankle boots and socks. The advantage of shorts far outweigh any disadvantages they may have, as with bare legs it is possible to be more silent when making

a close approach to elephants through thicket or dry grass than when wearing clothing which covers the legs. Long trousers are not nearly so comfortable. They become heavy when wet, and that is usual in the early mornings when the grass is wet with dew or rain, or later in the day when crossing streams. The lower part of the trouser legs get torn quickly and soon wear out through constant brushing through grass and thicket, particularly when wet. Breeches and gaiters or puttees are far too hot and tiring to wear on long marches.

A light sleeveless vest should be worn and a khaki tunic with short sleeves is practical. The type of tunic I wore was short and fitted comfortably but not loosely, with no breast pockets, and apart from the useful side pockets it was more suitable and cooler than an ordinary shirt. When crawling through a thicket breast pockets are apt to get caught up in small branches and thorns. Also the right breast pocket, particularly if not close buttoned, can catch on the end of the rifle stock when bringing it down from the shoulder to reload. This is distracting and although it would probably mean the loss of only a fraction of a second, fractions of seconds count when in tight corners. The carrying of ammunition in loops on each breast, Cossack fashion, is not recommended. Not only does the ammunition get caught in leaves and branches in thicket but is exposed to the full heat of the sun and this causes it to deteriorate quickly. That method of carrying ammunition looks impressive in the bars of Nairobi and Arusha but it is impracticable for serious hunting.

I carried ammunition in the side patch pockets of my tunic. The rounds of ammunition should all lie in the same direction and this should be checked from time to time. In this way there is no fumbling or waste of time when snatching ammunition from the pocket to reload the rifle. I found it better to have the ammunition lying in the pocket with the bullet end facing forward. Under the tunic, which opened down the front, I wore a belt on which was a short canvas bandolier which held five rounds of ammunition. The front of the tunic protected the ammunition from the direct heat of the sun but it was easy and fast to get at.

Ammunition which has been held for a considerable period of time is safe to use provided it has been carefully packed and in such a manner as to protect it from heat, or sudden changes in temperature. Old

ammunition should never be used as the percussion caps deteriorate.

I used to set out from my base camp on a hunting trip with fifteen or sixteen porters carrying food and kit but all travelling fairly light. My personal outfit consisted of two rifles carried by my gunbearer-trackers, a small box containing a change of clothes, socks, soap, towel, shaving kit (cut-throat razor), ammunition, quinine, rifle oil, first aid outfit, tobacco, a book and a few other odds and ends. The box also served as a low table. A rhookee chair, which is the most comfortable of all camp chairs, takes to pieces and makes a small light bundle. It takes a bush African a long time to learn how to put this type of chair together but to do it onesself takes only two or three minutes. A second box contained two cooking pots, a kettle, also used as a teapot, two enamel plates, enamel mug, knife, fork and spoon, sugar or honey, flour and strips of dried elephant meat. For bedding I took two or three blankets, depending on the weather, a mosquito net and a groundsheet in which the blankets and net were rolled. During the rains a second groundsheet was taken and at night it was slung in the form of a small tent fly over a rope or sapling tied between two trees. If there was grass available sufficient would be cut to make a comfortable bed; if there was no grass I slept on a folded blanket. The ultra-lightweight type of folding camp bed was not on the market at that time, neither were air mattresses.

It is remarkable how one develops an acute sense of awareness after living and hunting in the bush for long periods. Travelling through the bush with my trackers looking for spoor or even following spoor I was apt to start day-dreaming, particularly during the heat of the day. All the same, should any change in the situation occur I subconsciously noted the change immediately and if need be my reactions were very swift. Automatically one's direction of travel is checked by the sun, the prevailing wind, watercourses or any landmarks there may be. The direction of the wind is checked by noting the movement of the tops of grasses. By kicking up a bit of dust or burned ash as one goes along the wind is checked again and that is most important when hunting elephants. The sweaty skin on the back of the neck is very sensitive to the slightest breeze and if the wind or the line of direction of the hunt veers so as to bring the wind on to one's side or back it is immediately noticed, no matter how deeply one is engrossed in thought.

Likewise any unusual sound registers immediately and one stops dead still, alert and tense. Good African trackers often have that subconscious sense of awareness extremely well developed. Should one of the trackers or the hunter fail to hear a suspicious sound, a low hiss or a click of the thumb and finger usually stopped him. No suspicious sound, no matter how slight or unlikely, should be ignored and greater care should be taken on moving forward until it is found that the sound has no significance.

The art of moving silently through the bush is soon acquired although the technique varies slightly according to the type of bush hunted. Moving through thicket silently and at reasonable speed is only acquired after long practice. A way of putting one's feet silently on the ground when walking is soon learned and although it is slightly different from the way one walks on pavements and roads it is less tiring after a time. Again, although no particular attention is needed as to where the feet are placed, pieces of stick and other objects that may make a noise if trodden on, are avoided automatically. A stick on closer inspection may prove to be a snake lying dormant, as some snakes do in the chill of early morning. With practice these small things some of which are essential when close behind elephants, are soon learned. It is the skill with which they are applied that often makes the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful hunter.

At the end of a days hunting, or on the completion of a successful hunt, if we were sleeping in the bush, I would select my sleeping place and my men would select theirs. These sleeping places might be anything from five to fifteen yards apart. When possible a camp site was selected within a short distance of water and where there was plenty of firewood. This was not always possible, particularly if elephant spoor had been followed until late afternoon and daylight was fading. If any long dry grass grew nearby, and there was time, sufficient would be cut to provide each of us with a thin layer to sleep on. If there was none available, or it was already dark, we slept on the ground.

My groundsheet and two blankets were put on the grass and four sticks, each about five feet long, were cut. The sticks were stuck into the ground, one at each corner of my bed and my mosquito net hung on them. Two short forked sticks about nine inches long were cut and pushed into the ground alongside my bed. They were placed so that the

barrels of my two rifles lay in a fork. The stocks of the rifles were on the ground, close to my right hand when I was lying on my back, with the barrels pointing horizontally.

Firewood was collected by some of the men and camp fires lit. If it was an area for wild yams and they were in season some of the men went to search of them and dig them up. These were pooled with any wild fruit we had collected en route during the day.

While the kettle was boiling for tea I put the rhookee chair together. Drinking tea I used to examine and clean the rifles. Later I would have a sponge down. It is possible to keep reasonably clean with a wash rag, soap and a little hot water but not so effective as a hot bath, a luxury only to be had at base camp. The sponge down did remove the stale sweat, however, and most of the dirt. All medical authorities on tropical health warn against bathing in streams or standing water because of the danger of contracting bilharzia, a tropical disease which can produce alarming symptoms and cause considerable pain to the sufferer. I never contracted the disease although it is hard to explain why not. It is true I never bathed in open water but hardly a day passed that I did not wade across at least one stream and was sometimes in swamps ankle to waist deep for hours on end.

On killing an elephant it was my practice to make camp nearby, even if I had made the kill early in the day. If we had hunted for several days without luck we took the following day off as well. This gave my men and myself a day's rest; the ivory could be cut out at leisure and smoke racks set up so that our supply of dried meat was renewed. There was always much activity at these times and the camp took on an atmosphere of animated cheerfulness with much chattering and some singing. There is nothing that brings greater joy to a bush African's heart than an unlimited supply of meat. The amount they can consume is incredible. It was usually not long before a honey guide bird (*Indicatoridae*) started chattering in a nearby tree. Two or three of the men would take an axe and a glowing ember and set off after the bird.

The honey guide bird led the way, fluttering from tree top to tree top with a continuous shrill, agitated chattering encouraged by an occasional whistle call from the men following. On reaching the hive the bird stopped its chattering. Now and again it gave a low-toned

chirp while the men robbed the hive. The men would reward the bird by leaving on the ground a comb or two containing young bee larvae.

Some of the hives contained a large amount of honey. If my own share of the haul contained any fresh golden honey I kept some until it crystallised, making a most welcome addition to my diet.

When out hunting it is advisable to speak with a subdued voice and to insist that the men do the same. If on fresh elephant spoor talking should be in whispers. Communication with the trackers by signs is best. Elephants have acute hearing and some voices, even when not raised, have an extraordinary carrying quality in the bush. If the hunter is using a magazine rifle it is best to load the rifle when the spoor becomes fairly fresh and put the safety catch on to full safety. The loading operation should be done as silently as possible because an elephant seems to hear and become alarmed at a metallic sound quicker than any other. Although from the look of the spoor the elephant is probably an hour ahead it is better not to take chances since it may be only fifty yards ahead.

An indication as to whether the hunter is catching up with the elephant is the temperature of any droppings on the spoor. The testing of droppings should be done automatically. The hunter places the back of his hand on the droppings and if it is cold the piece is broken by a light kick and the inner part tested. If the droppings are warm on top it is advisable to make a final quick check to see that the rifle, which the hunter should then be carrying is ready for action.

When on the spoor of an elephant it is of utmost importance to test constantly the direction of the wind. A convenient way of doing this is to have a small bag of loosely woven, well worn calico containing fine wood ash. The tracker should give the bag an occasional shake while the spoor is followed.

In certain kinds of country during the dry season the wind can be very treacherous and tricky around mid-day. Sometimes the hunter can see or hear the elephants just ahead and at the same time feel a light breeze at the back of his neck. A shake of the bag of wood ash indicates that the wind is blowing towards the elephants. This shows there is a cross current of wind between the hunter and the elephants.

When this happens the hunter should do one of two things, depending on whether the bush is thick or fairly open. (1) Get back as quickly as possible for about a mile and wait until later in the afternoon when the wind becomes steady and reliable. (2) Go forward and close with the elephants, preferably at a jog trot if the bush allows this to be done, and trust to luck that the treacherous eddies will be in one's favour. To dally and try to work a treacherous wind would mean only a question of minutes or even seconds before the elephants get the scent and are away.

On firing at an elephant in a herd in country that has been systematically hunted, the rest of the herd will immediately stampede away. Whether one is hunting under elephant control or for ivory this usually means there is no chance of getting a second elephant. The herd rushes along at full speed for about seventy to eighty yards then stops to get organised, with calves and young in the middle. They then move off at a fast walking pace and it is impossible for a hunter to keep up with them. By sprinting after the herd at top speed it is possible to reach them while they are forming up and, if using a double-barrelled rifle, get in two more shots before they stampede again. The hunter must be in tip-top condition to do this otherwise he will be so much out of breath when he reaches the elephants that he cannot hold the rifle steady.

There can be a certain amount of risk in using this method for, unbeknown to the hunter, some of the herd may be detached from the section with which he is dealing. On three occasions when sprinting after the herd, detached elephants came in behind me travelling at full speed. It is surprising how fast a man can run when circumstances make it necessary, and some of the times I must have put up when I had to run for it may have been in world class.

Once I was caught between two sections of a herd and was very lucky to get clear. Sprinting after the stampeding herd at what I thought was my top speed I became aware of more elephants catching up from behind. My speed increased considerably and the position was that I was practically treading on the heels of the fleeing elephants in front while those behind were breathing down my neck. The elephants behind were so near, and the bush through which we were travelling too thick to allow me to get to one side and out of the way in time, that

I expected at any moment to feel a trunk grip me from behind. A broad elephant path, running at right angles to the direction we were taking, appeared and I was able to turn down it just in time. If one shoots a bull out of a party of three or four the other bulls do not act in this way. They set off at full speed and will not stop until they have covered a good many miles.

The hunting of a wily old bull elephant with big ivory is the greatest and most satisfying of all hunting. In my estimation it is the king of sport. Should a big bull get away wounded the first two or three hours following him is a time of anxiety and hopefulness. The hunter looks for a blood spoor, particularly in the droppings if a body shot has been taken. If the bull is alone it is easier to judge from the spoor whether he is travelling slowly and taking an occasional rest.

If after three hours or so it is found that the bull is moving steadily and strongly without halting to rest the hunter then settles down to a long stern chase. A steady pace following the spoor is set, one that can be kept up all day and for two or three days. By the end of the second day it is possible to judge whether the chances of catching up are reasonable or not. Should the bull start slowing down with frequent halts and circles down wind before each halt, then the hunt becomes exciting.

Apart from stomach rumblings elephants can make a varied number of sounds which they produce through their trunks. There is one sound that a big wounded single bull sometimes gives when hard-pressed and because of the nature of his wounds is unable to out-distance the hunter. It is like a long drawn out deep sigh and sometimes the elephant is heard moving for a few seconds, then silence. The silence may mean that after going a few yards he is waiting for a show down with the hunter. On the other hand it could be that the bull has moved on again in an attempt to get away, for elephants can move through all kinds of bush as silently as a cat if they wish to do so.

This long deep sighing sound I have always considered a warning sound. The bull is indicating he has had enough and if the hunt continues there will be trouble. When the sigh is followed by a short shrill, high pitched trumpeting blast, or a low ominous rumbling, it means that the bull has pin-pointed the hunter and a charge is imminent. When the crashing charge comes, pushing over everything in the way, the moment of truth has arrived for both hunter and the bull.

Elephant hunting is quite different from any other form of hunting in Africa. It involves great physical and mental strain and is the most strenuous and hazardous of all hunting. There is, of course, a great difference between hunting two or three elephants a year on a licence and the continuous elephant hunting of the professional. A person must be physically tough, able to cover long distances, often travelling from dawn to dusk and generally through thick bushes or high grass and swamp. The hunter must be able to do this day after day and month after month under the most difficult conditions, and be able to carry on indefinitely on an ill-balanced and often inadequate diet.

When closing with a herd of elephants or a single bull, whether the country be dense bush, high thick grass or fairly open, the hunter should rely only on the rifle he is carrying. Often the hunter has to approach a herd or a single elephant by crawling along tunnel-like tracks. Standing up to shoot there are often branches or high grass between hunter and gunbearer even if they are only a foot or two apart. These obstructions make it impossible to carry out a fast change of rifles. Another thing to take into consideration is that unless two rifles of the same calibre are used there is often a mess-up with the reloading.

Rifles should never be carried in soft cover cases nor should slings be used when hunting elephants or other dangerous game. Rain, even a heavy downpour, will not harm a rifle if it is properly cared for, but a damp cover case can cause considerable damage. In rough country slings are a nuisance and a source of danger as they are continually getting caught on small branches and foliage. If they are attached to the rifle with metal swivel hooks the front hook will now and again come into sharp contact with the rifle barrel. This gives a light clink and any metallic sound alerts and alarms an elephant.

Some hunters use the sling as a means of taking steadier aim by looping it round the left forearm. A similar effect can be obtained by gripping one or two long grass stalks in the left hand together with the forepart of the rifle. If the grass stalks are held taut a steadying effect is given to the aiming of the rifle. A few hunters carry a light shooting stick. This is placed vertically on the ground with the upper end alongside and grasped together with the rifle in the left hand. These aids to steadier shooting are of some help on long shots with a light calibre rifle, but generally speaking are of little use when shooting elephants.

The most comfortable way of carrying a heavy double-barrelled rifle for any length of time is over the shoulder with the barrels pointing backwards and held by the pistol grip just behind the trigger guard. The rifle should be parallel to the ground with the front of the trigger guard against the front of the shoulder. When carried in this manner it can be brought into action very quickly. On getting close to elephants, and if the going permitted, I found that the best way to carry a heavy rifle was to hold it at an angle of forty or fifty degrees with the barrels in the crook of the left arm and the right hand on the pistol grip. All my rifles had broad and shallow V backsights and medium fine foresights. With this type of backsight a fairly large part of the animal aimed at can be seen and enables the shooter to align his sights on a vital target more quickly than with a U-shaped or narrow V backsight.

The hunter must watch his rifles all the time, and no matter how reliable and intelligent his gunbearer may be it is better to clean his guns himself. One stupid peculiarity I found common to nearly all gunbearers was that, on halting for a rest he would invariably lean the rifle he was carrying against a thin sapling. The sapling swayed at the first puff of wind, causing the rifle to fall to the ground and possibly damaging the sights. It is difficult to break a gunbearer of such a bad habit. It requires very little daily attention to keep a rifle in tip-top condition, but once the barrels have become pitted through neglect no amount of cleaning will ever bring them back again. If the cleaning of a rifle is left to a gunbearer it is better to make him use a cleaning rod and not a pull-through. Sooner or later the gunbearer, through being heavy handed, will break the pull through cord leaving the cleaning rag solidly jammed in the barrel. Spare sights, springs and firing pins should be carried and one should be able to replace such parts if necessary.

Except to zero a rifle I never fired on a range or carried out any target practice. The kind of rifle practice I did do was carried out for about an hour on each of the days I was in base camp, or in a bush camp if we were having a day off. I used to fasten a small piece of paper on each of seven or eight bushes and trees close to camp. Some of the pieces of paper were placed at a height roughly equivalent to the height of an elephant's head, and others at about the height of its heart. Strolling

about among these targets with my double ·577 rifle I would suddenly stop, turn round, select a target, throw up the rifle, aim and press the trigger. All that would be done in one swift, smooth motion, without any slow deliberate aiming at the target. I would then look more carefully down the sights to check the amount of aiming error I may have made.

This form of practice gave me great speed and accuracy, so much so that sometimes I would mark the target then close my eyes, bring up the rifle, press the trigger, then check the sighting. Very often the rifle was dead on the target and it was seldom that there was more than a slight degree of error. A further gain from this form of practice is that the rifle becomes part and parcel of oneself. It is also good for one's footwork. If the feet are not placed correctly the body is off balance and fast and accurate shooting is almost impossible. For this method of training the rifle should always be the one used on elephants, and it is necessary to use snap caps otherwise the firing pins would soon get damaged. About six snap caps should be used so that practice in the speed of reloading is obtained at the same time.

It is also necessary to have the flair or gift to do the right thing, and to do it perfectly at the right moment. This flair is acquired, to a certain degree, by some hunters, through long experience, but to be a first-class elephant hunter just a little more than that is required. It is the manner in which the swift appraisal of a situation, during the final moments of a hunt, is taken, in deciding which shot to take or what action to take in the event of a dangerous charge, whether to move swiftly or slowly to close up with the elephant and which line of approach to take. All these distinguish the outstanding elephant hunter from the one who is just good.

The few first-class African elephant hunters I hunted with on elephant control all had one thing in common. When the moment for action came they were decisive, swift in action and with no hesitancy. The mediocre or just good elephant hunter will hesitate, fiddle about, attempt a line of approach then change his mind and take another. If more than one vital shot is offered he will hesitate for a second, or a fraction of a second, before deciding which shot to take. Again, if shooting on crop protection and having closed with a herd, he will hesitate before deciding which elephant to take first. It is true that very

often there is time and to spare to make the final moves and take the shot. Sometimes there is no time to spare at all, and even when there appears to be plenty of time some small thing can alter the whole situation. I do not consider it is entirely a question of courage, for among elephant hunters courage is probably the commonest virtue.

CHAPTER SIX

Superstition and Witchcraft concerning Elephant Hunting

On a continent which is so riddled with witchcraft it is only to be expected that elephant hunting has a full share of various superstitions. The African elephant hunters have great faith in the charms which they buy from witch-doctors. As with their modern contemporaries in medicine the witch-doctor tends to specialise in various forms of his art. Some of them build up a great reputation on their love potions. Others are renowned for the power of their charms, or 'medicine', when used to place a curse on an enemy. Others again are well known for the infallibility of their charms prepared for the elephant hunter. Clients made foot journeys of four or five days, sometimes further, to visit a specialist witch-doctor and paid comparatively high prices for advice. Other practitioners were not truly witch-doctors but practised as herbalists. Some of them were very competent and became well-known. Apart from the charms obtained from a witch-doctor there were the various taboos which affected the conduct of a member of a clan, family group, circumcision group or even the individual himself if out hunting.

On arrival at a village in the area to be hunted enquiries were made about what elephants were in the vicinity and if there are any with good tusks. If the information sounded promising, arrangements were made for two or three locals to act as guides and trackers. The locals

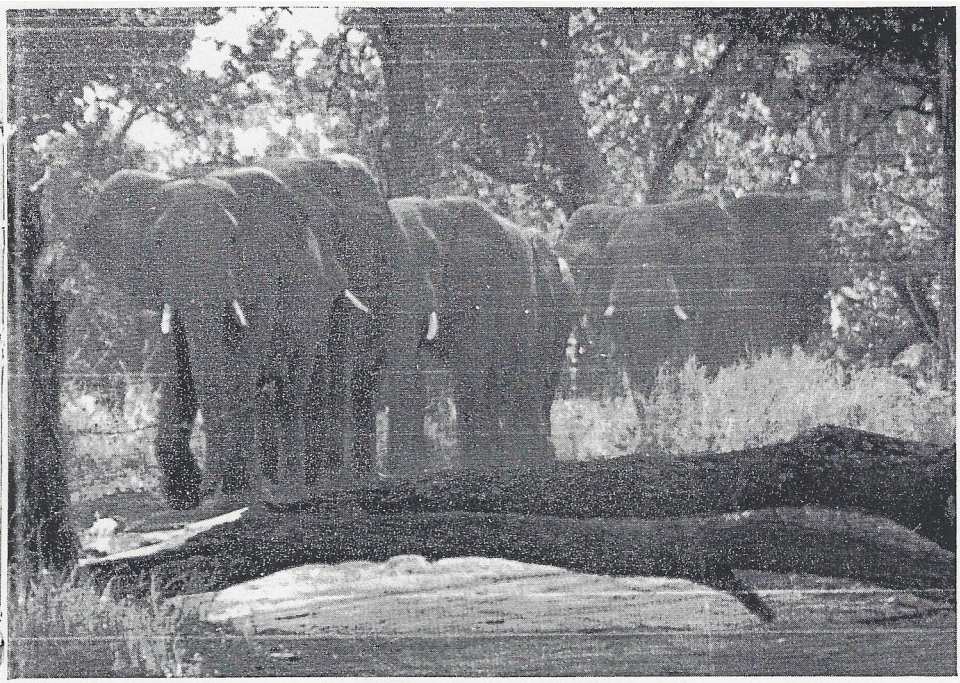
who offer their services are usually the nimrods of the village and their prowess may be judged by the number of small weal-like marks on their arms which denote the number of elephants or big game animals they have killed.

The majority of local hunters ignored their own particular taboo when hunting with a European, holding that the European was the actual hunter and in all probability had charms so powerful that they would cancel out their own taboos. Some native hunters, however, will not accept this point of view and several times, while following elephants, a local hunter declared he had suddenly become very ill. His head ached, his stomach ached, he had pains in his bones and would have to return to his home. Later careful enquiries elicited the fact that some incident had happened on the spoor which conflicted with the taboos concerning the man who had turned back.

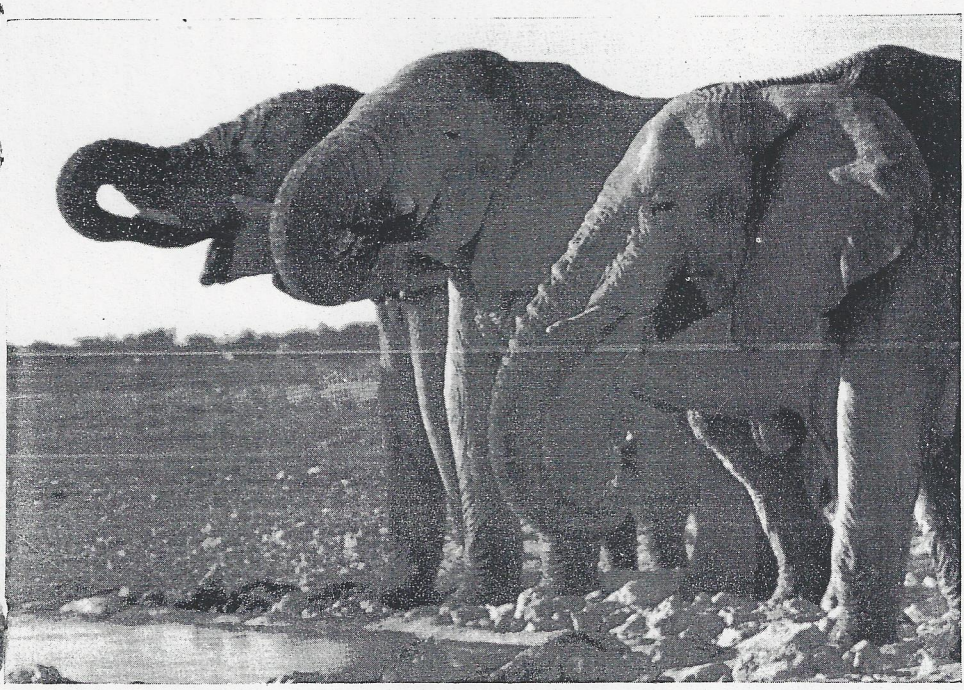
The incidents which affect these hunters are small in themselves. They vary from hunter to hunter and would normally pass unnoticed. The incidents are of great significance to the hunter, however, and could be because a certain species of bird had acted in a certain manner, such as flying from left to right ahead of the hunter or perhaps in the opposite direction. Or a snake which moves or acts in a certain manner had not moved at all.

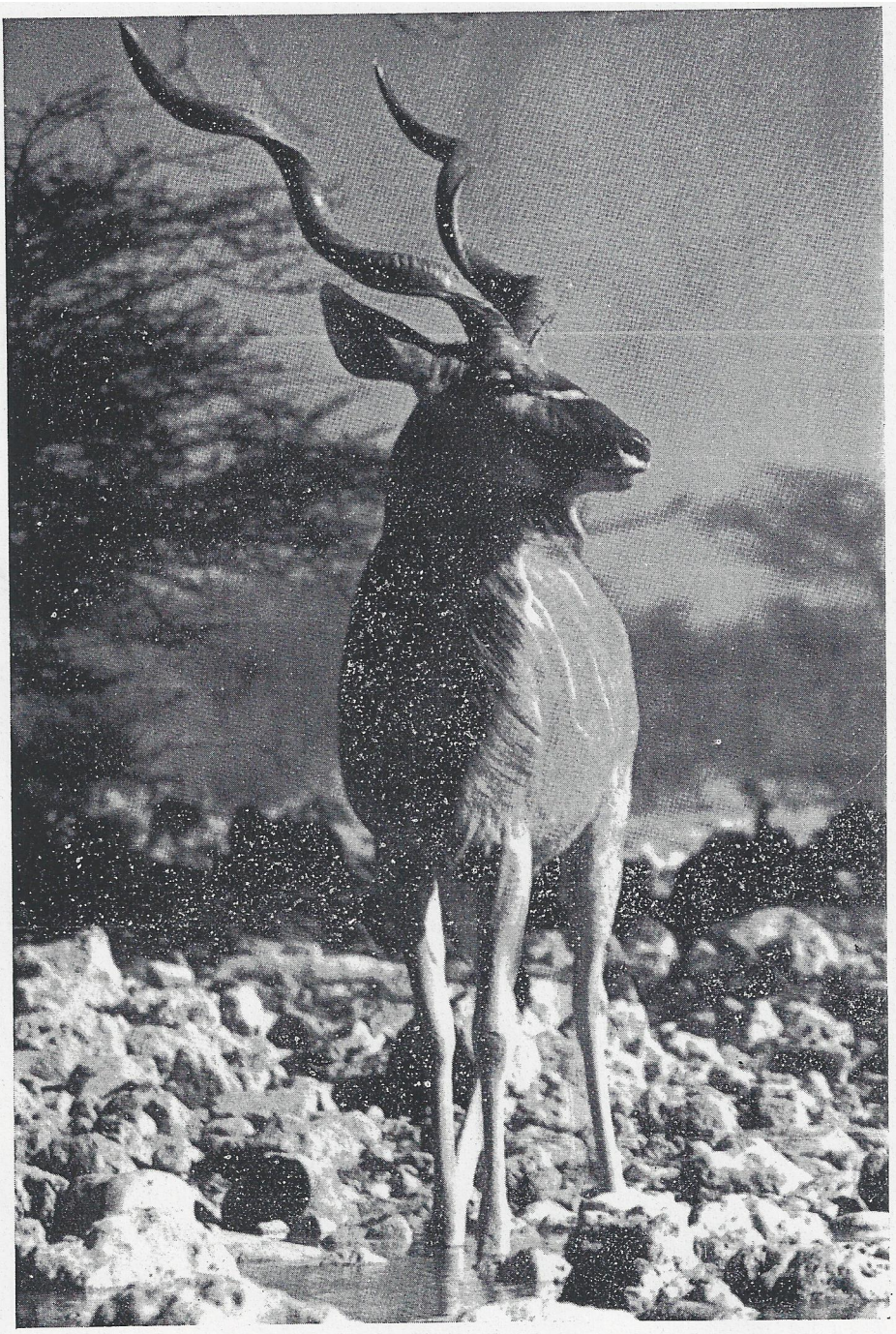
One superstition which is common to all native hunters throughout tropical Africa is that the hunter must not, on any account, sleep with a woman the night before going elephant hunting. Should it be that none of the hunters had slept with a woman the previous night and yet an elephant turned nasty and caused trouble then undoubtedly the wife of the hunter, or of one of the party, had been unfaithful while the hunt was in progress.

Situated on either side of an elephant's head, and mid-way between the eye and the ear, in both sexes there is a temporal gland with a small slit-like orifice. This gland contains a strong smelling, cheese-like substance. A fluid is exuded from these glands, sometimes quite copiously. The gland is considered by certain authorities to have some sexual significance, and it is possible that an elephant when in season (on heat) would exude this strong smelling fluid, traces of which would be left on foliage or high grass. Other elephants passing that way, even several days later, would become aware that an elephant ready for



A party of big bull elephants travelling along a well-defined and much-used elephant road. (*Below*) Three of the above bulls at a water-hole.





Greater Kudu.

mating had passed that way. It is a musky kind of smell and several times when following the spoor of a big bull, particularly through swamp where the air lay heavy and still, this smell was so strong it could almost be tasted. Perhaps the smell of the liquid from a cow elephant differs from that of the bull, but this is pure surmise for there is a dearth of reliable scientific information on the breeding habits of African elephant.

When cutting into the gland of a dead elephant a small piece of wood will be found occasionally; it is round and smooth, about one inch long and somewhat thicker than a match. An elephant forcing its way through a thicket is the obvious cause of the wood being there, for a twig could readily force its way into the gland, then break off leaving the piece inside, but no African would ever accept that explanation. In their minds there is no doubt at all that the piece of wood is the 'charm' or 'dowa' of that particular elephant. Amongst other properties the piece of stick is said to possess is that it helps the elephant to find its way through the bush, particularly when travelling at night. It is said too that the stick operates in a manner similar to a divining rod and so informs the elephant when to dig in a dry river bed for water. The piece of wood is much prized by African elephant hunters and they carry it with other charms when out hunting.

There is no doubt that this belief in charms, suitably prepared and blessed by a witch-doctor, even a most benign one, is absolute and gives the African elephant hunter more confidence when hunting. Periodically a hunter had his weapons and charms blessed at the pagan shrine of the witch-doctor whom he favoured. Such rituals, and the methods of the blessings, varied slightly from tribe to tribe but the most remarkable thing was the similarity of the whole proceeding throughout tropical Africa.

There were three occasions when I had my rifles blessed, once in the Kihansi area of Ulanga, Tanganyika; once on the Congo-Northern Rhodesian border; and once in the Obo District, French Equatorial Africa. All these places are some thousand miles apart from each other. yet in each case the ritual was almost identical. In my own case the ceremonies were carried out by the Headman or petty chief of the village. These Headmen were not in the true sense of the word with-doctors but what one may term, for lack of a more suitable word,

'wisemen'. Such men did have some hereditary rights, a knowledge of herbal medicines, a profound knowledge of tribal laws, and were shrewd judges of character.

The shrines, at which the blessing ceremony took place, were almost identical, consisting of a small round native-type hut some six feet in diameter situated near the village but well hidden from alien prying eyes. The entrance to the hut was small, similar to the entrance to a dog kennel; this necessitated lying flat on the stomach and with a wriggling and squirming motion get inside so that one was in a position of obeisance on entering and seeing the two small wooden idols side by side facing the entrance. Inside the hut there was never room for more than three or four people and the roof was so low that one had to remain kneeling or squatting. The two idols, one about twenty-four inches high and the other about eighteen inches high, were both dressed in pieces of cloth and wore beads. There was a small bowl in front of each containing meal.

On each occasion I was accompanied by my tracker, and my rifles were laid crosswise in front of the idols with the taller idol on my left front and the smaller idol to my right front. The Headman squatted on my right, close to the left hand of the smaller idol and half facing both the idols and myself, while I squatted and faced them across my rifles. The Headman, after making several movements with his hands, proceeded to ask the idols to intercede with God on my behalf; he stated he could vouch for me and that I was worthy of consideration and help in my elephant hunting. After the service, which was short and conducted in a dignified manner, the supplicant was expected to put money offerings in the bowls. Then one had to wriggle out backwards from the presence, through the small entrance, and again in a lowly and obeisant manner.

Throughout pagan Africa there was a profound belief in God, and the idols were never worshipped as such but as intermediates between the Headman and God. The Headman was the only person authorised to make any approach to God through the idols. Living so close to the primitive African I came across several things which made me wonder if there wasn't something in their pagan beliefs, also in witchcraft. At the time I had some sort of belief but after returning to my own people I sloughed off such half beliefs as readily as a returned African sloughs

off the veneer of Western civilization he may have acquired in Europe.

It is a fact that on the first hunting trip I made after Headman Tambala had officiated at the blessing of my rifles in the shrine in his village on the Congo–Northern Rhodesia border, I killed eighteen elephants in one day. They were nearly all bulls and it was the largest number of elephants I have killed in any one day during my long career as an elephant hunter.

On another occasion in French Equatorial Africa I hunted for nearly a month without being able to get up to any elephant at all and this in itself was difficult to explain as there were elephants in the area and we had hunted fairly hard. My tracker, Kinanda, advised me to have my rifles blessed by the Headman of the village near my base camp as he was a 'wiseman' of some repute. The blessing ceremony was carried out and the first day out after my rifles had been blessed we got up to a small herd of elephants and I managed to kill two of them.

It may be much more difficult to believe in witchcraft proper, but the fact that it shows results cannot be denied and it would be foolish to dismiss it as pure twaddle. To show how easily even an unimaginative person could be drawn to believe in witchcraft, I give an example. This interesting case concerning witchcraft and lions occurred at Kazikazi during 1938. Kazikazi is situated in Manyoni District in the Central Province of Tanganyika. It is a small railway station on the Central railway line running from Dar-es-Salaam to Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika.

A Mr. Harrison of the Tsetse Research Department was in the Kazikazi area carrying out various experiments. These were part of a long-term programme aimed at the eventual eradication of tsetse fly in that part of the Territory. A native of the district named Mkwavi was a local brewer and he produced a fiery drink called kangalla. This potent liquor was made from honey, and in the distilling process certain roots were added to give it extra kick. This liquid dynamite became renowned in the area and Mkwavi did well out of selling it. The main thing was that should a person get drunk on kangalla the next day he had only to consume one or two tots of liquor and he was in a pleasant state of semi-drunkenness for the rest of the day. This could be kept up indefinitely at the comparatively small cost of two

drinks per day; this was one of the main reasons for kangalla's great popularity.

The brewing of native beer from sorghums was legal, but the distilling of hard liquor was not. Mr. Harrison made no move to interfere with Mkwavi's distilling activities until six of his own African staff became addicted to the drink and had to be discharged for continued drunkenness. These men joined the distilling concern and were employed by Mkwavi to collect and buy wild honey in the countryside. This was more than Mr. Harrison could stand so he reported the matter to higher authorities. The case was investigated and eventually five natives, including Mkwavi, were arrested on a charge of distilling illicit liquor. They were tried in a magistrate's court by the District Administrative Officer who found them guilty and imposed heavy fines as sentence.

Later an African employed by Mr. Harrison overheard Mkwavi discussing the case with his partners. Mkwavi mentioned a well-known witch-doctor living at the village of Kidurumo who sold a concoction guaranteed to bring lions to any desired spot. Mkwavi said he would visit this witch-doctor and make arrangements for six lions to harrass Mr. Harrison and his staff.

The Headman of Kazikazi village and the local natives all knew that Mkwavi intended to make the journey to Kidurumo and obtain the medicine from the witch-doctor. Shortly after Mkwavi's return Mr. Harrison had to move camp to a place out in the bush, some twenty miles from the nearest village, where he was to carry out further work on tsetse flies. It was the height of the dry season and water had to be brought to the camp by lorry. Due to the lack of surface water there were no game animals in the area except for a very few dik-dik and duiker.

Nothing of any importance happened during the first five days and the experimental work being carried out went on normally. On the sixth night Mr. Harrison was awakened at about 10 p.m. by something scratching and rubbing against the wall of his tent. Thinking it was a hyaena or a jackal he loaded and cocked his rifle. He took a torch, opened the tent fly and switched on the light to look out. To his great surprise he saw six full grown lions standing only five or six yards from his tent. Harrison fired at one of the lions and killed it on the spot.

He then fired at a second lion which went off wounded and the other lions went away. The next day he went after the wounded lion and after going a short distance came upon it dead. The bullet which accounted for the second lion had passed through its body and hit yet a third lion. The third one left a fairly heavy blood spoor but although followed it was not found. Two days after this incident, Mr. Burtt, also of the Tsetse Research Department was in the area inspecting the work done when he met two lions, one of which he succeeded in killing.

Fifteen days later, having completed the preliminary work at the bush camp, Mr. Harrison returned to his base camp at Kazikazi. The living quarters was a small house built of poles and grass and after the evening meal, while he and Mr. Burtt were sitting on the verandah, they heard loud lapping at a water hole about thirty yards away. Taking their rifles and torches they walked over to see what it was. When the torches were switched on they saw six lions at the water hole. They both opened fire, one lion was killed outright and two others badly wounded, both of which were found dead the next day.

Mkwavi had openly stated that by means of the witch-doctor's medicine he would produce six lions to cause trouble to Mr. Harrison and his staff. Although Harrison and Burtt had killed six lions, and a possible seventh this did not in the eyes of the locals detract one iota from the powers of the witch-doctor. Did not Mkwavi say he would produce six lions and did he not do so on two occasions, in spite of the fact that at least two of the first six were killed. Prior to this episode Mr. Harrison, who had been working in the area for a considerable time, had never been troubled by lions. The prestige of the witch-doctor of Kidurumo was greatly enhanced in the eyes of the local Africans.

On the advent of the muzzle loading musket in Africa numbers of Africans became professional elephant hunters. Certain tribes produced the best elephant hunters and very often they came from one or two clans within their different tribes. These professional elephant hunters formed guilds or societies but they were not secret societies in the true sense of the word; they were more in the nature of the Guilds of Craftsmen which flourished in medieval England. These societies existed

through most of the elephant countries of tropical Africa and from what I could gather the initiation, procedure to full membership, markings on the arms, and also rights and obligations after being raised to a full member, were very much the same wherever the guilds were active. I never had any difficulty in proving myself a fellow craftsman among members of such societies in the different, and sometimes far apart, elephant countries in which I hunted.

I was made a member of one of these societies by the hunters of the Wambungu tribe in the Ulanga area, Mahenge District, Tanganyika. In that area I had killed many elephants and came to know most of the local hunters very well indeed. The way to become a member was to make a few enquiries in the right quarters as to whether one would be acceptable or not, and a little judicious bribery. A formal application was then made to the leaders of the society in that particular area. The leaders then hold a meeting to consider the application, and if considered suitable the applicant was informed of the date on which to prove himself as an elephant hunter and worthy therefore to become a member of the society.

This proving took the form of going out to hunt an elephant accompanied by a leading member. No one else was allowed on the hunt. The member was an observer only, he could not assist with the hunting in any way and the applicant had to track, hunt, close with and kill the elephant himself. It took three or four hunts, accompanied by the observer, before I was able to get up to a shootable bull and deal with it.

If one was successful in passing the test one was summoned to appear before a meeting of the society, at a given place and time. It was necessary to take a goodly amount of trade cloth, a few goats, hoes, salt and native beer. The beer was solemnly drunk, the goats slaughtered and eaten and the trade goods shared out amongst the elders of the society. Speeches were made, flowery compliments passed to and fro.

The initiation ceremony was held at a secluded spot a mile or so from the village, only members attended and the initiate again had to take native beer, goats and other gifts to the ceremony. A certain amount of mumbo-jumbo was gone through during the ceremony and included a form of dance. This dance was based on what usually occurs during an elephant hunt; it was very interesting to watch and very cleverly done.

While the miming dance, with quite realistic accompanying sounds,

is in progress an elder of the society, using a small sharp knife, makes several fine horizontal cuts on the right thumb, right shoulder and over the right eyebrow of the initiate. In the case of a left-handed shot, of which there are quite a number among Africans, the cuts are made on the left side. These marks are to assist the hunter to shoot accurately. A magic potion in paste form is rubbed into the cuts and this causes a permanent raised weal like a scar, oval in shape and quite noticeable, in each cut. In my case the officiating elder only went through the motions with the knife. He did not make any incisions but rubbed the magic potion on the skin at the appropriate places.

Some of the contents of the magic paste are obtained from the extreme tip of the elephant's trunk and tail, scrapings from the toe-nails of an elephant's front feet, a piece of the nerve from its tusk, certain bones from three or four snakes, including a python, and some bone or other from a lion. This material, together with other ingredients, is ground and mixed into a paste. It is believed that this magic medicine, together with the manner in which it is applied, not only greatly improves one's markmanship when shooting an elephant but also makes it impossible for the elephant to see or smell the hunter.

A comparatively large fee had to be paid to the society for the initiation ceremony, as well as the cost of the feast, beer and the dance which followed. Apart from the security one was supposed to acquire while hunting elephants, there were also certain prerogatives for which a member could claim a fee.

One of these prerogatives was the extraction of the nerve from the tusk of a dead elephant. This could only be safely carried out by a member of the society and had to be done out of sight of non-members. After a tusk had been chopped out of the dead elephant it was taken with the nerve intact to some nearby place of concealment. A mouthful of leaves were taken and well chewed. As soon as the nerve was extracted some of the chewed leaves were spat into the hollow of the tusk, some were spat on the outside of the hollow and the nerve was then buried. It was believed that if any man not a member of a guild saw the operation, or eat a part of the nerve, he would become impotent. In the case of a woman she would become barren.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Rifles and Shots

Hunters differ considerably on the merits and efficiency of different calibre rifles and also on the superiority or otherwise of magazine rifles *contra* double-barrelled rifles when used on game animals. For use on elephants there are those who advocate the light-bore rifle and others again who will only use medium- or heavy-bore rifles. However, whether one believes in small-, medium- or large-bore rifles it is always advisable to use a good quality one which is absolutely reliable and in which one has complete confidence. To hunt elephants, or other dangerous game for that matter, with an unsuitable, faulty, or inaccurate rifle is surely asking for trouble, yet it is surprising how often sportsmen will go after elephants with unsuitable weapons.

Karamojo Bell was the only professional elephant hunter of experience that I know of who advocated and used light-bore rifles in preference to medium- or heavy-bore rifles. There were one or two others with less experience, such as Denis D. Lyell and Captain G. H. Stigand, who also preferred light bores. Bell used a ·275 cal. (7 mm.) and a ·256 cal. (6·5 mm.) rifles and Lyell a ·256. All other professional elephant hunters who hunted on their own account in French Equatorial Africa and the Belgian Congo used heavy- or medium-bore rifles.

The following list of elephant hunters, and the rifles they used, shows how experience is heavily on the side of medium- and big-bore rifles.

Sutherland, ·577 cal. double and ·425 magazine; Micky Norton, ·577 cal. double; Major (Miguu) Anderson, ·577 cal. double; Fitz Williams, ·450 cal. double and·416 cal. magazine; A. B. Anderson, ·400/450 cal. double; Simpson, ·600 cal. double; Rossi, ·577 cal. double and David Blunt, ·416 magazine. Similarly, the elephant hunters who, as employees of Tanganyika Government, hunted elephants on a large scale on crop protection schemes, all used medium- or large-bore rifles.

In considering the merits of different rifles today one must rule out the old 4 bore and 8 bore black powder guns; and the single shot falling block rifle is so rarely seen nowadays that it cannot be considered either. For the hunting of soft-skin plains game, where shots at less than 150 yards range are seldom obtained, a suitable small-bore magazine rifle of a calibre between ·256 to ·375 is the best type to use. However, elephant hunting is a different matter altogether, and it is on record that more amateur hunters have been killed by dangerous game when using small-bore rifles than those using medium- or large-bore rifles.

I have heard several arguments in favour of small-bore rifles for hunting elephants and the most amazing one was that it is more sporting to use a small bore. The other argument of exponents of small bores is that the light rifle has greater penetration, it is handier to use, and one shoots more accurately, and that a bullet from a light bore is just as effective as one from a large bore if placed in a vital spot. It is better to accept such assumptions with reservations.

When hunting elephants in high elephant grass it is common practice to shoot from the top of a bamboo ladder, or a small platform on a heavy surveyor-type tripod, and occasionally from the tops of ant heaps. Under such conditions a light rifle is the only possible weapon and I used a ·318 cal. magazine rifle most successfully when shooting in this manner. I did fire once from the top of a ladder with a D.B. ·450 cal. and I parted company with ladder and rifle at the first shot.

Hunting elephant on foot in dense thicket or in thick high grass is a different matter altogether and under those conditions the light-bore rifle has nothing in its favour at all. It is seldom one fires at an elephant at more than forty yards; indeed, if it is possible, half that range or less is preferable. In dense cover one seldom gets a shot at more than twenty yards and very often at ten yards or less. Both medium and heavy

double-barrelled rifles and magazine rifles, if built by a reputable London gunsmith, are deadly accurate and have more than sufficient penetration at that range. If a hunter cannot place a shot where he wishes on a stationary elephant, with a medium- or heavy-bore rifle at twenty to forty yards range, it is unlikely he will do so with a light rifle. In fact, in my experience I have found that, particularly when one is tired, one holds a heavy rifle steadier than a light one when taking aim.

A twig or grass stalk is more likely to deflect a light bullet than a heavy bullet. When hunting in thick country a clear steady shot is not always to be had and in the event of a charge in such country it is seldom one gets a clear shot. No matter how good a shot one may be one has not the time to take a steady aim at the fast moving bulk of an elephant's head rapidly approaching, and probably pushing a wall of grass or bush on to the hunter. To take the chest shot with a light-bore rifle under such circumstances would be foolish, bearing in mind that the elephant's trunk will be down and curled inwards towards its chest, through which the bullet will have to penetrate to enter the chest. Should the frontal brain shot be taken and the brain missed by a small margin the light bullet will not stop or turn a charging elephant and one might as well use a catapult. Using a heavy bore such as a ·577 cal. a bullet placed close to the brain would drop the elephant on the spot and, if slightly further from the brain, it will at least knock the elephant's head sideways and give one a chance of a fair second shot.

One may say that such situations seldom if ever arise. If one hunts elephants steadily and for a long enough time that situation will certainly arise more than once, and once is enough should one fail at the critical moment.

It is a mistake to over-gun oneself. By that I mean one should never use a rifle which is too heavy for one's physical strength. Also, if it is found that the recoil is excessive it will put the hunter off his shooting and make him gun shy. Sutherland and Miguu Anderson both used D.B. cal. ·577 rifles, David Blunt used a ·416 cal. magazine rifle and they were all lightweight men but very tough and fit.

Hunters who advocate the use of light-bore rifles for hunting elephants make much of the fact that they are lighter to carry on a full

day's hunt than a big bore. That is true, but I never found it necessary to carry a rifle all day unless I was hunting for an antelope and then I naturally used a light-bore rifle. Even when following the spoor of elephant I never took my rifle until the spoor became fresh, or at about noon if we had reached an area which looked a likely spot where the elephants had halted for their mid-day rest. Following a wounded elephant one should always carry a rifle and when hunting antelope chances are often lost by not carrying a rifle. But in the whole of my experience I have never lost an elephant through not carrying a rifle.

The statement that it is more sporting to use a light-bore rifle against elephants rather than a heavy bore is one that I cannot understand. Unless one is a photographer the object of hunting elephants is to kill, and to kill cleanly and if possible instantaneously. These are the simple ethics of a sportsman or a professional elephant hunter who is prepared to match his skill, courage and life against a worthy and doughty adversary.

The brain shot, if offered, is the one I prefer when shooting elephants, but after a number of failures with this shot while using a light-bore rifle, I gave it up for the heart shot, unless I was using a medium or heavy bore. I found that the light-bore bullet did not have sufficient penetration for a frontal brain shot on a big bull. Once while using a ladder in high grass I took the brain shot on a big bull at about fifteen yards range. The bull was stationary; the rifle, when aimed, was on the same level as its brain and I had a clear steady shot. The bullet struck exactly where I aimed to hit, indicated by the small spurt of dust made by the bullet on impact, but the bullet failed to reach the brain and only staggered the bull. He turned his stern towards me and two more bulls who were close by closed in immediately on either side of the wounded one and hustled him away. Due to the high grass no chance of a second shot was offered. The rifle was a ·318 cal. magnum by a well-known gunsmith and I am confident that had the identical shot been taken with a medium- or heavy-bore it would have killed the elephant.

I found also that light-bore bullets very often do not keep a true course after entering an elephant's skull. Should a light-bore bullet miss the brain by a small margin it will have no effect, except perhaps to enrage the animal. The same shot with a heavy-bore will drop the

elephant and keep him down for a short while, and possibly kill him from a haemorrhage in the brain. The heavy- and medium-bores are not only more effective on head shots but will smash the leg or shoulder bones far more effectively than a light bore.

Light-bores are better for heart shots, but even so they can be less effective than a large- or medium-bore. Hunting once in a large depression which had the appearance of being the bed of a dried-up lake I got up to a big bull in the late evening. The vegetation in this depression was dense, thick cane grass (mateti) and there were no trees. I was using a ·303 cal. rifle and after making a careful approach I took the heart shot. On receiving the bullet the bull crashed off and was quickly hidden by the cane grass. As it was now becoming dark and it was inadvisable to follow I returned to camp. My camp was some three or four miles away on a high ridge overlooking the same depression. We were up and about early the next morning and when looking through my field-glasses I could see the bull standing about a mile away from where I had shot him. When we went down into the high grass in the depression we lost sight of him but going to the spot where I had fired we picked up his spoor and followed. When we got up to him an hour or so later he was lying dead. We cut into the dead elephant to follow the track of the bullet and found that it had gone through the lower region of the heart. With this wound it had lived over twelve hours and had walked a full mile.

On another occasion my men cut into a dead elephant to obtain the heart which is one of the tastier parts of the animal to eat. On cutting into it the knife ran into a metallic object and we found it was a round bullet from a muzzle loader gun. The bullet was completely grown over and the animal appeared quite normal. Neither situation would have arisen had the shots been taken with a large or medium-bore rifle.

The double-barrelled rifle and the magazine rifle are the two types generally used when hunting elephants. Whether one uses a double or a magazine rifle is, of course, a matter of personal choice, providing the question of cost does not arise. The cost of a good quality double is considerably higher than that of a good quality magazine but a rifle of this description if cared for will last for many years. Some first-class professional elephant hunters I have known preferred the magazine

rifle, while others, and they were in the majority, preferred double-barrelled rifles. The main thing is to have complete confidence in one's rifle, regardless of calibre or type of action.

I prefer shooting with a double-barrelled rifle when hunting elephants and this is not entirely due to the fact that I started my shooting as a youth with a double-barrel shot-gun. One thing in which a good quality, well fitting double is most certainly superior to a good quality magazine is in the balance, smoothness and speed in which it comes up to the shoulder and the sights are aligned. Also there is less likelihood of a jam with a double than with a magazine rifle. The first two rounds from a double are faster to get off than the first two rounds from a magazine rifle, also there is no metallic rattle, which occurs with a bolt action, and which so often betrays one's position to the elephant.

If the double barrel is a non-ejector its advantages over the magazine rifle ends after firing the first two rounds because to reload a double-barrel non-ejector, although silent, takes time and is comparatively slow. If I had to make the choice between a non-ejector double-barrel and a magazine rifle as the one weapon I had to use on elephants I would possibly select a magazine rifle, depending on the type of country I was hunting in.

I accustomed myself to carry two rounds of ammunition between the fingers of my left hand when approaching elephants. On firing both barrels I would eject the spent cartridge cases, grab the two rounds from my left fingers, insert them in the rifle and be ready for my third shot as quickly, or even quicker than a person using a magazine rifle. After the fourth round is fired with both types of rifle the advantage of the double-barrel ejector is even greater because the medium- or large-bore magazine rifle only holds four rounds and in the case of the ·500 cal. and ·505 cal. rifles only three rounds.

Ballistics is a most interesting subject to study but it is a science which should be left entirely in the hands of scientists and gunmakers. The theoretical striking power of various rifles given in tables on ballistics do not always prove to be true in actual practice when used on elephants. The high theoretical striking power given to a number of modern rifles is often obtained through an increase in the propellant charge and a light bullet. It is this considerably increased velocity of the

bullet which gives this type of rifle its theoretical high striking power. For example, the ·375 cal. magnum, among other similar rifles gives most excellent results when used on soft skinned game, but when used on elephants, with their tremendous bulk and weight, it has no more 'shock' effect or stopping power than a ·318 cal. rifle.

Because of its great weight and strength the elephant must be considered separately from any other African big game animal. Rifles one may consider heavy bores for lion or buffalo, should be classified as medium- or light-bores when used against elephants. A heavy bullet with a big enough charge behind it to give sufficient penetration is much more effective on elephants than a light bullet with a high or medium velocity. For elephant hunting I consider that all rifles from ·400 cal. downwards should be considered small-bores and from ·400 cal. up to ·475 cal. as medium-bores and from ·475 cal. up to ·600 cal. as large bores.

A rifle of any calibre must be of sufficient weight otherwise the recoil is excessive and this particularly applies to large-bore rifles. A good gunsmith knows these optimum weights and such matters can be safely left in his hands. I have noticed, though, that a rifle fired in cold blood at a target seems to kick much more than when it is fired in the heat of the moment at an animal. The recoil from a ·577 cal. double on firing up to six rounds quickly I did not find excessive and is more in the nature of a hard push, but after firing that number of rounds the barrels become hot and it is then apt to punish one rather severely. The most I ever fired rapidly with a ·577 cal. double was twenty-six rounds and it took me two or three days to recover from the punishment received. I have used a ·600 cal. double, firing a 900-grain bullet and 110 grain cordite but I did not like the rifle. It is too heavy and clumsy, difficult to reload when hot, the recoil so heavy that one is slow in firing the second barrel, and as a weapon it is not nearly so effective as a ·577 cal. double.

Not only is it necessary to use a rifle suitable for the job when hunting elephants, but the correct type of ammunition must also be used. Soft nosed or pointed nosed bullets should never be used on elephants. The ordinary soft nosed bullet does not have the necessary penetration, particularly if used for a head shot. The soft nosed bullet, with only a small amount of lead showing will penetrate to an elephant's heart if

the shot is taken from the side, provided it does not encounter a leg bone or rib in its course, in which event it would mushroom or break up and probably not reach a vital spot. A solid medium-bore bullet through the elephant's heart is just as lethal as a soft nosed bullet. Apart from any heavy and hard bones it may encounter there is an inch thick tough hide to penetrate before the bullet enters the body. The pointed bullet is easily deflected or turned off its course if it comes in contact with even a small bone. With a brain shot this type of bullet does not travel straight in the skull and even when it is moving through entirely fleshy tissue is apt to deflect from its course or turn over, which is sometimes termed 'key-holing'. At one time manufacturers turned out ·577 cal. and ·600 cal. ammunition with a flat nosed bullet. Although this bullet struck with terrific force, and seemed to really shake an elephant on impact, they did not have sufficient penetration, particularly on head shots, and it is not advisable to use this type of bullet on elephants although it could be very effective for lion or buffalo.

Another type of bullet manufacturers put on the market had its jacket made of some kind of copper- or bronze-coloured metal. This bullet is unsuitable for use on elephant for the metal is too soft and the nose of the bullet 'sets up', particularly if used for a head shot, and reduces penetration considerably. This type of bullet does not have sufficient penetration for a frontal brain shot on a big bull elephant. On two occasions when I took that shot, both on big bulls from about fifteen yards range, this type of bullet let me down. I was able to get up to one of the bulls several hours later and kill it. On cutting out the bullet which had entered the skull at the correct spot, we found it had only penetrated some eight or nine inches and the nose of the bullet was flat, with an indentation in the centre. As bullets nowadays have a coating of a copper-coloured metal which, I understand, protects the rifling in the barrel, one cannot tell readily whether the bullet has a steel jacket or one of softer metal.

There are two simple ways of testing a batch of ammunition. One is to cut into the bullet with a hacksaw blade and the cut will show what kind of metal the jacket is made of. A second way is to use a magnet and if it does not cling to the bullet then it is made of bronze-like metal. Only round nosed, steel jacketed, solid bullets should be used against elephants.

Shots

The two shots mostly used on elephants are the brain shot and the heart shot. Some hunters prefer the one and some the other but a hunter should be prepared to take either. It was most noticeable how the most skilled and experienced elephant hunters among the African Game Scouts in Tanganyika preferred the heart shot and very seldom attempted the brain shot.

The beginner would be well advised to watch the cutting up of his first dead elephant and carefully examine and memorise the position of the vital organs, that is, if he can control the horde of meat-hungry Africans who will be all over and inside the carcass. It is essential to know exactly where the heart lies in the body and the brain in the skull. The heart lies roughly between the two front legs and about one quarter of the way up the body from the bottom of its chest. If one is standing full square broadside-on to an elephant, and it is standing straight on its front legs the shot to take for the heart would be a vertical line between the centre and back of the front leg to a point about one-quarter of the way up its body. Very often one is not standing fully broadside on and then one's aim must be adjusted accordingly.

The brain shot, which I prefer to any other, is not so easy and the target is smaller. It lies between the two ear-holes with the smaller portion of the brain lying to the rear and the larger portion lying forward of what one may term the axis between the two ear-holes. Again, if one is fully broadside-on one takes a line between the eye and the ear-hole and the bullet should enter the skull fairly near to the ear-hole. The best way to reach the brain from this position is through the ear-hole itself.

The brain shot from other angles is more difficult but the shot is there to be taken from an arc of two hundred and forty degrees or slightly more. It is not possible to explain brain shots from different positions; one must know exactly where the brain lies inside the skull and one shoots at the brain and not at any particular target on the outside of the head. Where the bullet should enter the head on its way to the brain depends entirely upon how near one is to the elephant, whether one is squatting, standing, or on top of an ant heap or ladder, whether the elephant is on higher or lower ground than the hunter, whether the head is held high or low; it is entirely a matter of angles.

There are several other shots which may be taken on elephants, most of them crippling shots, and I do not recommend any of them. The knee shot is one that is often mentioned in conversation and in books on hunting but how this shot became so publicised I do not know. It is seldom one can see an elephant's knees. I have not as yet met anyone who ever used this shot. Unless a heavy-bore rifle is used it is doubtful if the shot would be effective.

The spine shot is another which can lead to disappointment. That part of the hide of an elephant covering the spine and its back down to the base of its tail is very thick and extremely tough. If this shot is taken from the stern at short range, more often than not the bullet will richochet because of the acute angle of an elephant's hind quarters and the thick, tough hide. A much more effective shot from the stern is into the scrotum itself. There is no bone or hard tissue to prevent the bullet reaching the heart lying in the front cavity of the chest. Should the bullet miss the heart this shot is a cruel one as it will probably hit the internal testes and other organs, but it is a fatal shot.

Another and better shot can sometimes be obtained from the stern (providing one is within fifteen or twenty yards range and the bush is suitable) by making a rumbling sound. This sound is made by blowing through ones loosely held lips, making a quick blub-blub-blub-blub sound and it is a poor imitation of one of the several kinds of rumbling sounds made by elephants. The elephant on occasions is a most inquisitive animal and on hearing this sound will often turn its head sideways to look backwards to see what it is all about. It is then that a chance may be offered and one can angle the shot into the brain. On one occasion when I tried out this rumbling noise the elephant first turned its head sideways to look back and as I continued making the noise it turned right round and came towards me to investigate. Although this particular elephant was a big one his ivory was small and he was not worth killing.

Kidney shots, spine shots from various angles, hip bone shots and other fancy shots are better left alone. Rather, try to get into position for a good shot at a vital target and do not shoot at all if a chancy shot means the possibility of the quarry getting away wounded. Very often the hunter has to decide quickly whether or not to take an offered shot but it is only through experience that one learns whether it is the moment to act swiftly or to bide one's time.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Searching for Elephant Country

There was a vague but persistent rumour that the French in their territories still issued licences which permitted a hunter to shoot an unlimited number of elephants. That kind of elephant licence had once been common to most African territories but such licences had long since been abolished in British-administered countries and in the Congo. I decided to go to French Equatorial Africa to see for myself. Travelling down the Congo River by train and river boat to Coquilhatville I went by river boat up the Ubangui River to Bangui the administrative capital of Ubangui-Shari-Chad.

I made enquiries about elephants but could get little reliable information from the French and Greek traders in the town. Bangui was only a small town with a small European population but their lack of knowledge of the interior was incredible. After a few days I met a French elephant hunter named Tourte, who had given up hunting and settled down to trading. He was kindly and friendly and as helpful as any old hunter could be to a young one. The country Tourte had hunted in his earlier days lay to the north-east of Fort Crampel. In his time that country had held many elephants and much big ivory. He did warn me that it was many years since he left the area but he suggested that I go to the area and give it a try.

Travelling by car along a very rough track I reached Fort Crampel

and I was able to collect a team of porters there. Further enquiries about elephants brought little information of any value. Having obtained a supply of meal I set off a few days later with my porters in a north-easterly direction.

Nearly the whole of the African population of a large part of eastern Ubangui-Shari had been wiped out by sleeping sickness by 1926. This vast area, some hundred thousand square miles in extent, was roughly a two hundred mile-deep belt running north and south along the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan border from the Mbomu River in the south some five hundred miles to the River Auk in the north. The relatively few survivors had gathered into small, widely spaced settlements. Most of the settlements were a hundred miles or more apart. Earlier in the century it had been first-class elephant country but by 1926 it was disappointing!

The famous hunter, Bell, describes the River Auk area as being an elephant hunter's paradise and he was most successful during his stay there. So far as the numbers of elephants were concerned the River Auk area had changed since those days. I did a long foot safari from Fort Crampel through Ndele travelling north-east to the River Auk. From there I turned south through Wadi Jellab, then to Muka, Bria, Iyalinga and on to Obo in the south-east corner of Upper Ubangui. The safari was made in search of good elephant country but it was a complete failure. Elephants were there but few in number and during the whole journey I not only failed to kill an elephant with tusks larger than thirty pounds each but never saw a spoor big enough to be considered worth while following.

The reason for the disappearance of elephants and other game from that country was due to ring burning which was carried out on a large scale. The country was open savanna land covered in high elephant grass and lent itself admirably to that method of destroying game. When properly organised it took comparatively few experienced men to start a ring fire several miles in circumference. Any animal or bird that failed to make good its escape before the surrounding wall of flame was completed was doomed. The high, terrifying wall of flame gained ferocity and speed as it progressed and not only were all the animals within the circle killed but smaller antelopes were also partly cooked. Once the ring fire was going well the speed, ferocity and

height of the flames were truly terrifying. Large clumps of burning grass were carried to great heights above the centre of the fire and there was a dense pall of smoke high in the sky covering the whole area. Although the noise of the holocaust was considerable there was a strange undercurrent of silence. The smoke high overhead attracted large numbers of vultures and kites and they could be seen coming from afar. They would circle well outside the ascending column of heat and after the fire had died out they would drop down to the dead animals below.

This method of killing game animals was most wasteful. There was often far more meat on hand than the natives could cut up and dry before it became putrid. It destroyed complete herds of elephants including calves, young females and breeding cows usually with tusks so small that they had little or no economic value. Most of the tusks were scorched, some badly charred by the fire and had lost much of their value. Having seen one of these burning operations at close quarters, and others from far away, I no longer wondered why there were so few elephants and so little game life in the country.

This organised burning was an additional hazard when hunting in the dry season. Sometimes the section of country to be burnt would be up to ten miles in circumference and the men on the perimeter of the areas were several hundred yards apart. When the smoke signal was given to start the fire each man would run trailing a five-foot-long burning torch behind him. He would run towards the fire started by the next man in the circle. The torch was made of a special long grass, tied in a thick bundle and lightly bound with a piece of thin creeper every six inches or so. The type of grass used burned in such a manner that as the man ran with the torch trailing behind him, pieces of burning grass three or four inches long would fall off the end into the tinder dry standing grass. In this way it was only a matter of minutes before there was a complete ring of fire. The areas were sometimes so large that it would have been possible for a hunter to have been inside at the start of the fire. Anyone caught in such a ring of fire would have had no hope whatever of getting out alive.

After the country had been burnt out the African hunters teamed up in gangs of ten to fifteen, armed with muzzle loaders and few magazine rifles. Almost all were of the Kresh tribe and they hunted the broad

belts of evergreen forests along the dry watercourses where the elephants lived at this time of year. This was the country the Kresh had once occupied and it lay on both sides of longitude 24 degrees East and between latitude 6 degrees and 8 degrees North. Whether it was the sleeping sickness epidemic which swept through the country or some other reason, I never learned but the whole tribe moved out eastward across the border and settled in the Sudan. When the dry season was well advanced gangs of well-armed Kresh tribesmen moved back into their old country to hunt elephants. They knew the area intimately and as wild yams were plentiful at that time of year it was not necessary for them to make arrangements for supplies of meal to be brought the long distance from their homes. At the height of the dry season wild yams are at their best, some being the size of a rugby football, floury in texture when cooked and good to eat.

The Kresh hunters not only looked tough but were tough in every sense of the word. There were a few tricky moments when I first encountered a gang of about ten members. It turned out that on seeing me they thought I was a French officer on patrol to deal with the gangs. They made no attempt to scatter in retreat. They opened out then stood their ground and appeared quite menacing. Fortunately one of my trackers spoke their language and explained who I was. The tension eased immediately and when the gang had assured themselves that the information was true they became very friendly. The most extraordinary manner in which news can travel through almost totally uninhabited large areas of African bush is incredible, even in country where drums are not used to pass on information. Because of this 'bush telegraph' my subsequent encounters with three or four other gangs were pleasant, with no show of hostility.

On the occasions when we sighted each other we moved towards each other in a friendly manner, then sat in the shade chatting and exchanging news for half an hour or so. At each meeting I would ask the leader if he could tell me of an area where elephants were plentiful. In great detail he would tell me of some area where there were elephants in great numbers. He would then ask me solemnly if I could tell *him* of some good place to hunt and I would give him more or less a repeat of what he had told me, but the place would be in a different direction. The fact that each knew we were giving information which

was nothing but a pack of lies was considered to be a great joke and caused much laughter among all of us. I have found that if one can develop the primitive African's type of humour and formulate some joke which causes genuine amusement it is easier to deal with these people should any difficulty arise.

Muka and Bria on the River Mbi were both small settlements and there was a solitary French trader at each. The traders, like all other Frenchmen I met, were most hospitable but were rather suspicious and very guarded when elephants were discussed. This was only to be expected as ivory obtained by African hunters in their areas was brought to them for sale, and ivory was an important part of their trade. They also provided heavy muzzle loading guns, percussion caps and powder to African hunters who in return undertook to sell them their ivory.

By the time I reached Iyalinga I had covered over fifteen hundred miles on foot and much of the journey had been through totally uninhabited country. It was apparent to me that although this large piece of territory had once been good elephant country a European elephant hunter, no matter how skilful, would be lucky if he covered more than bare expenses. I was beginning to wonder what part of Africa I should try next.

On reaching Iyalinga and having pitched camp I called on the two traders there, one a Frenchman and the other a Baluchi. The Baluchi was an elderly man of character and looked hale and hearty in spite of his age. I was the first Englishman he had seen for a good many years and for some reason this gave him great pleasure. When he found I spoke Kiswahili fluently, a language he himself had not spoken for nearly twenty years, his joy was beyond bounds and he gazed at me as if I was a rarity of great price. It is true that the prestige of Englishmen in those days was extremely high amongst natives and others in out-of-the-way places in Africa, although the people themselves may never have met one. This was due to those few wandering Englishmen, who almost to a man, were very proud indeed of their country and nationality. They strove to live up to the high standards of fairness and honesty ingrained in earlier generations and for which their country then stood. Unfortunately, times and values have changed and this prestige no longer exists.

From the appearance of the small trading store the Baluchi was not too prosperous but his hospitality was generously given and of the best he had to offer. He told me he had joined the British Forces in Zanzibar many years ago and had served as a soldier in Kenya and Uganda. Taking his discharge in Uganda he had wandered around and after hunting elephants for a number of years settled in this out-of-the-way place as a trader and had married two local women. With great pride he showed me the rifle he had used since he first set out on an adventurous life. It was a single-barrel ·450 cal. rifle with a falling block action, and having been well cared for it was still in perfect condition. He had no ammunition left for the rifle, was unable to obtain any and I could not help him. The information the Baluchi gave me about elephants in that part of the country was not encouraging but he did tell me he had heard there were a few European elephant hunters in the Upper Ubangui and that some of them were Englishmen.

After resting a few days at Iyalinga I said good-bye to my friend the Baluchi and acting on the news he had given me I trekked for Obo, the administrative post of the Upper Ubangui.

CHAPTER NINE

The Upper Ubangui

Hunting here and there, travelling by devious ways in search of good elephant country, I eventually reached Obo, the French administrative post for that region. In those spacious days before motor-cars and aeroplanes intruded into the more remote parts of Africa there was never any hurry. There was plenty of time to do whatever one wished to do. The pace of the old Africa was geared to the pace of the ox (quote, Paul Kruger) and the pace of the ox is steady and slow and the end is just the same. That is the pace most suited to tropical Africa and the Africans and I believe that after the flurry and scurry of the present unrealistic upheaval is over the country will revert to that slow pace.

The French post of Obo was built on a high flat-topped hill. The flat area was about two acres in extent and was surrounded by a high stockade of vertical hardwood poles. Inside the stockade there was a roomy house, office, outbuildings and quarters for a small garrison of Senegalese soldiers. The framework of all the buildings was made of bocassus palm trunks and this wood, like the hardwood in the stockade, is most durable and is untouched by termites. Wattle and daub was used for the walls of the thatched buildings. Not far from the foot of the hill was a small cemetery containing the graves of a dozen or so Europeans. Two or three of the graves were marked by engraved

stones, the others were just mounds. There were one or two mouldering wooden crosses with the inscriptions undecipherable and there was nothing to record who these men had been and what they had done. That they had died in solitude was understood.

Leaving my porters at the foot of the hill I went up the broad winding footpath to the gate at the stockade entrance where an armed soldier stood on duty. I was escorted to the office by another soldier and made welcome by the French administrative officer. He introduced himself as Monsieur J. Barbaret holding the rank of Adjoint Principal de 1st Classe. After producing my papers and giving particulars about myself I told him I would like to do some hunting in his district. Wishing me success he told me that relations between administration and hunters in the district were extremely cordial and that they were 'bon garcons'. After this friendly meeting I left the station and, collecting my porters at the bottom of the hill, went to the small trading centre a mile away where I made camp.

There were three wattle and daub stores at the trading centre containing a few simple native trade goods, each store run by an African. These stores and others similar to them at widely spaced centres throughout the territory, belonged to French or Greek traders living either in Bangui or Bangassu. The owners would visit their up-country stores once or twice a year. The amount of trade was small although the region was rich in wild rubber, but the native population, having been reduced by sleeping sickness, was sparse. Travelling south the appearance of the country had gradually changed. This region was much more wooded, with large areas of evergreen forest and most of the streams carried permanent water.

I stayed at Obo for four days and after making enquiries I obtained a fairly clear picture of where and how the elephant hunters were operating. It was in this Upper Ubangui region in the Ubangui-Shari-Chad Territory of French Equatorial Africa that the last of the true professional ivory hunters had gathered. They had gravitated gradually to the south-western corner of the territory, the centre of which lies roughly longitude 6 degrees North and latitude 26 degrees East. The main reason why they were in this area was because the French still issued licences on which an unlimited number of elephants could be killed. The licences were known as 'Permis de chasse Commercial' and were

valid for one year from date of issue. The price of one of these in 1926 was three thousand francs but the cost continued to rise until in 1929 they were ten thousand francs.

There were only two restrictive regulations attached to the licence. One was that the owner of the licence had to do the hunting himself, not just to sit in camp and send his Africans out to do the hunting. The second regulation was that the licence had to be shown on demand to any administrative person in authority. Because of some international agreement on game preservation the 'Permis de chasse Commercial' was abolished in 1929. I have always found the French to be practical, logical and considerate on all occasions and they were not prepared to deprive the few remaining professional elephant hunters of their means of making a livelihood. They therefore issued another licence for twenty elephants for the same price as the 'Commercial' licence which it replaced. This new licence, valid for one year, was only granted to an established bona fide professional elephant hunter. Any newcomer could obtain a licence for only three elephants a year.

Twenty elephants a year was sufficient for a hunter to make a reasonable income provided he could obtain good tuskers. There was a steady influx of bull elephants from the Belgian Congo with some good ivory among them. The local Azande were not a hunting tribe and the country having large areas of evergreen forest did not lend itself to ring-burning. About fifty per cent of the annual total weight of ivory produced by the hunters was made up of tusks weighing thirty-five pounds each or less. Among the other fifty per cent there were a few tusks weighing between sixty and eighty pounds each.

Under the original unlimited licence no hunter would turn down an elephant with tusks weighing only twenty pounds each but under the new licence he thought twice before killing such an elephant.

There is an element of luck in elephant hunting but that applies only to one or two elephants a year. The results of a full year's hunting depended entirely on the skill and activity of the hunter himself. The size of a spoor is an indication of the size of the elephant but not its tusks. Unless the animal has been digging at a salt lick it is impossible to tell from the spoor whether the bull has one or two tusks, is a fifty-pounder or more or a no-tusker.

Again, having killed the elephant, on first examination the tusks

might appear to weigh about eighty pounds each, but after removal there might be such large hollow sections that the weight was only fifty pounds each. It may happen too that on closing in on an elephant everything breaks just right. There is no trouble with the wind, there is an easy approach and the elephant is standing in a perfect position for a good shot. But lucky breaks of eighty pounders or more, with easy approach and simple shot, are few and far between.

The local chief, Bamboli, had his village about four miles from Obo and he was most helpful. He provided me with permanent porters and a guide who turned out to be an excellent man with a thorough knowledge of a large section of the country. The chief and guide suggested two places where I might build my base camp and after examining both I decided on a place called Mutobo, some eight miles south of Obo. I selected a pleasant hilltop site for my small pole and thatch house. Lower down the slope my men built their huts close to a permanent stream, while behind my house was a permanent spring of sweet water. It was a pleasant spot and I soon had a vegetable garden going and banana trees planted. Those of my men who had wives started their own maize and sweet potato patches.

Normally one never hunted out from base to return the same day; the actual place where the camp was built was of secondary importance. What was more important was to select a site with pleasant and healthy surroundings and with good permanent water. About ten days after deciding on the site, and by this time my men had made considerable progress with the building of the camp, I went out for a one-day hunt with the guide and two trackers. It was a successful day for by mid-morning we picked up the fresh spoor of two big bulls. After they had taken us on a long circuit I got them both at about four o'clock in the afternoon. Both bulls had tusks of over seventy pounds each, and the circuit they had taken brought us back to within two miles of my camp. This large supply of fresh meat close at hand brought great pleasure to my men, and also to chief Bamboli and his people to whom I sent the news.

During the three years I used that camp I only succeeded in killing one other elephant nearby and that was through a piece of luck. I happened to be back in my camp resting for a few days when a native messenger returning to his employer, Signor Rossi, an elephant

hunter whose camp was two days journey away, passed through. Half an hour later the messenger returned and told us he had encountered an elephant on the footpath. With my trackers I hurried along to find that the single bull had crossed the path and after following for half an hour I got up with him and killed him. Although he was a big animal his tusks were only about thirty-five pounds each.

The place had another attraction—a group of chimpanzees who stayed a few days at a time in a large evergreen forest about half a mile from camp. Whenever I was back in camp I heard them calling and I walked to the forest to watch them. The locals never killed chimpanzees so they were never unduly alarmed on seeing a human being, and I received much pleasure from watching them, sometimes at fairly close range. If I attempted to approach too near they withdrew a distance. Eventually I came to recognise individual members of the group and in particular one elderly baldheaded male who was a personage of character.

I was pleased with the camp when it was finished and although I never lived there for more than three months in a year, I prefered it to any other camp I had ever owned. After a few months the place took on a settled and homely appearance. My vegetable garden and the maize and sweet potato patches planted by my men were doing well. There were fowls, including my own, some with chicks. My own fowls became pets so I was unable to eat them, but their eggs came in very useful. The only time one of my fowls was killed was on the rare occasion when I had a visitor when I permitted the cook to select a bird from the three or four that were not particular favourites.

Returning to camp once after a four-week hunting trip we came on a small isolated hamlet of four huts. To my great astonishment in front of one of the huts there was a small bed of zinnias in flower. This was the first and last time I ever saw flowers being cultivated and cared for by a bush-living African. I asked the owner if I could have a few plants in exchange for some dried elephant meat. The man gladly agreed but I believe he would have freely given the plants as a gift. We dug up five or six flowering plants, with the roots and soil intact, and took them with us packed in banana leaves. Under a huge mapogoro thorn tree in front of my house a bed was dug and the zinnias carefully planted. In spite of care and watering the plants died and knowing nothing about

gardening I was at a loss as to why this happened. Returning from the next hunting trip I was delighted to find many small self-seeded plants and they were planted out. It was not long before there were four beds of zinnias in flower. They looked very gay and gave quite a splash of colour to the camp.

An addition to my establishment was a young dog given to me by chief Bamboli. I called the dog Joni pepe, which in the Sanga language means 'no good', but his name was often abreviated to Joni meaning 'good'. He was of an ancient breed now listed at Crufts, under the breed of Basenji. I do not think this name is very appropriate for in many parts of Africa the word 'basenje' means a savage or uncivilised being. They are small dogs, the size of a fox terrier, with pricked fox-like ears and face and were usually brown in colour, although some were liver and brown with a few pure liver colour. The tail is tightly curled over the back.

Until the mid-1920's this type of dog was known from the Sudan and Chad in the north, through the Congo and East Africa down into the Rhodesias. During this period there was a considerable increase in the number of Europeans entering tropical Africa to stay. Some brought their dogs with them, and breeding kennels for different breeds of European dogs were started. The Africans came to the conclusion that the imported dogs were superior to their own breed. They used every means possible to obtain a European breed or to get their bitches covered by one and by their standards would pay a high price. The result is that with the exception of a few pockets in isolated places the Basenji breed of dogs is now extinct in Africa. This was a great loss to Africa and to the African in particular, although he never appeared to appreciate this fact.

The Basenji was highly resistant to trypanosomiasis carried by the tsetse fly, and appeared immune to tick borne diseases. It was seldom that a tick was seen on a Basenji yet a European breed, unless regularly dipped in a bath of insecticide or de-ticked by hand, was covered with them. Helminths of different kinds did not appear to have the same ill effects on the Basenji as on European breeds. As a hunting dog, working with or without a small wooden clapper attached to its neck, the Basenji was very good and had an excellent nose. They seldom barked, were not very demonstrative but were as faithful as any dog can be to

its master. They thrived on a diet which would reduce a European dog to a bag of bones—and that was an asset when the dog belonged to the average African.

Joni pepe was liver coloured and a typical specimen of the breed. He was a friendly companion for me when I was in camp but I never took him with me on hunting trips. When I left camp on a hunt Joni had to be fastened up for at least twenty-four hours otherwise he would have picked up our trail and followed until he caught up with us. I took him with me when I went out in the evenings to look for guinea fowl in the patches of forest near the camp. The guinea fowls were handsome birds, crested with blue spots in the feathers, a bare light blue neck and a red throat. They were not at all plentiful and the best time to find them was in the evening when the cock bird could sometimes be heard giving its most musical trilling call while perched on a branch. It was this call that I stalked. On getting within range of the birds there was no nonsense about waiting for them to get on the wing, since I was hunting purely for the pot. To have done so would have meant little chance of getting in a shot because of the branches and foliage in the forest. On these excursions Joni was most obedient, showed his intelligence and enjoyed himself as much as I did.

It was only by taking an interest in small, simple things that a man kept sane. Many men who lived a solitary life in the bush, going for periods of twelve months or longer without seeing anyone of their own nationality or race, seemed to become a little odd. Some men were affected more than others. A small minority went completely round the bend, usually in a harmless way, and never came back again. Higher officials in the Colonial Service were aware that long spells of solitude affected some men. For this reason they made allowances for any such cases and considered them occupational hazards.

CHAPTER TEN

The Last of the Few

It was several months after becoming established in my camp at Mutobo before I met all the hunters in the area. The first one was Captain J. Sutherland who had been a legendary figure to me for many years. My camp was only partly finished when he came with his porters along the path which passed nearby. Sutherland was on his way back to his camp north of Obo from a visit to the British sleeping sickness post of Yubo on the Sudan border. I was still in the 'hero worship' stage so this first meeting with Sutherland remains vivid in my memory.

Some four months after my camp was finished the French Chef de Circonscription, whose headquarters was at Bangassu toured his province and Obo was included in the tour. Monsieur Barbaret, the Adjoint Principal at Obo, sent out messages to elephant hunters inviting them to come in to meet the Chef de Circonscription. This was a kindly thought on the Adjoint's part and seeing that the visiting official was a high ranking officer with considerable authority those of us who received the message in time went into Obo.

The message sent to me arrived at my camp two days after I had left on a hunting trip. The messenger who brought the letter, carried in the usual cleft stick, impressed on those of my men whose turn it was to remain behind to take care of the camp, that the message was of great

importance. Two of my men set out at once to follow my trail and get the letter to me; they took my dog, Joni, with them. It so happened that on the morning of our second day out we struck the spoor of a single big bull elephant. The spoor was fairly fresh and by late afternoon I caught up and killed him. The tusks went about seventy-five pounds each, and to allow my men to replenish our stock of dried meat, which was low, I camped near the dead elephant for two days. This delay enabled my men to catch up with me, and by making long marches I was able to reach Obo on the right date.

At Obo I found that those of the hunters who had received their invitations had made camp at the foot of the hill on which the administrative post stood. I made camp their, too, and then went up the hill to see the Adjoint. He made me welcome and told me we were all invited to a dinner that evening in honour of his visiting superior officer. I returned to camp and found the hunters gathered together talking shop or passing on odd bits of news. One or two admired the tusks I had with me but no one asked in what area I had shot them. They were a fine bunch of men, quiet spoken, with not a boastful word among them, and they all had a quality of character which I find difficult to define.

Late that afternoon while having tea we saw the Chef de Circonscription approaching with his safari. He was riding in what is known as a 'tepoi'. This is a canvas chair with a foot rest and a canvas canopy to keep off the sun. There was a light pole attached to either side of the chair and it was carried on the shoulders of four porters. Usually there were two or three teams of porters to a 'tepoi' and it was a form of transport commonly used by officials, traders and missionaries. We all moved across to the road to greet the Chef de Circonscription. He stopped his 'tepoi' and walked over to where we stood, obviously gratified at the respect we had shown his rank and he seemed very glad to meet us. The party that evening was a great success with plenty of drink and good food. The next morning we went our different ways, some taking to the bush just outside Obo, others returning to their camps.

Of the eight professional elephant hunters working in the Upper Ubangui six of us had come in to meet the Chef de Circonscription. I learned later that the other two received their invitations too late for

them to reach Obo in time. The names of the eight hunters were Anderson, Christanger, Kaspare, Simpson, Wackernie, Fitzwilliams, Sutherland and myself. The only other occasion when a number of hunters foregathered was at my Mutobo camp at Christmas 1927. That Christmas gathering was a very happy affair and lasted for three days. On no occasion did I come across any show of professional jealousy in any of the hunters, except one who came to the area a year later.

Except for Sutherland, G. L. Fitzwilliams had been in the area longer than any of the other hunters. In company with Major G. H. Anderson he had gone there for a short hunting trip but, liking the life so much, decided to stay on. Anderson was a very old and close friend of Sutherland's and he had made the trip mainly to see his old companion again and later returned to Kenya.

Fitzwilliams, an Englishman, was a doctor of medicine and although a good hunter he did not hunt so assiduously as the others. It was thought that he had private means and hunted elephants because he loved the life. He was a tall thin man, well over six foot, with dark eyes and hair and wore glasses which were a handicap to him when hunting in thick bush or when it was raining. A most kindly and hospitable man, as I found when I twice spent the night with him at his camp at Kippa Village. Kippa was three days walk west of Obo and it was comfortable well built. Because of rheumatism Fitzwilliams left Africa and retired to London where he amused himself turning ivory in a workshop he had set up.

A. B. Anderson was a Scot from Edinburgh, over six feet in height and very well built. He had blue eyes and grew a large fair curly beard. It was the most magnificent beard I have ever known and he looked a real Viking. He had previously hunted elephants successfully in the Belgian Congo. We became close friends and several times we stayed at each others' camp for a few days. When elephant hunting was no longer economic he took up land near his camp and planted coffee. This proved a failure, not only because of a world-wide slump in commodity prices but also because the distance his crop had to be transported was too great. Anderson later became Game Warden of the Equatorial Province, Sudan. In the late 1940's he retired to South Africa where he married, but by that time he was a sick man. He

suffered from two or three tropical diseases and the inadequate diet of an elephant hunter over many years had undermined his health. He died in his early fifties.

Simpson came from Kenya where he had done some hunting. After hunting his way across the Belgian Congo he made his way eventually to Obo and built a base camp situated two days' journey south-east of my Mutobo camp. He was an Englishman in his thirties, with a friendly disposition, but although he worked hard he was only moderately successful as a hunter. In 1928 he was killed by an elephant in the bush not far from his camp. His men carried the body into Obo and the path they followed passed through my camp. It so happened that I was there at the time so I went with the body to Obo.

From what his men told me it appeared that Simpson had got up to a single bull elephant in thick forest late in the afternoon. He fired from short range and the elephant charged. Although the rifle was a double-barrelled ·600 cal. the second barrel failed to stop or turn the elephant. Simpson tried to get to the side but the elephant lashed sideways with its trunk hitting him a terrific blow on the shoulder and the base of the neck, killing him instantly. The elephant never stopped but continued on its way.

In Obo the Adjoint and myself examined the body, all broken and bent, and there was no doubt about the cause of his death. We buried Simpson that evening and there was another mound of brown earth in that small, isolated cemetery.

Those mounds, and others in small cemeteries widely scattered throughout the country, were a grim tribute to France's desire for an empire. I was more impressed by the mounds of earth in small graveyards across Africa than by the memorial plaques in Westminster Abbey. The work those men had done, inspired by patriotic desire and a spirit of adventure, turned out to be completely wasted effort. Within four decades men of a lesser breed were in high authority, and handed Africa back to the rule of the witch-doctors and petty tyrants. The African peasant will suffer grievously by the withdrawal of firm, paternal European administration.

Kaspare was a Frenchman, short, dark, slightly built, very quiet and reserved in manner. Before coming to the Upper Ubangui he had hunted elephants in the Sanga River area of French Moyen Congo. A

large and powerful trading company had the sole trading rights in the Sanga River Districts and all ivory obtained there had to be sold to this company. Kaspare left because of the nature of the country itself. During late 1929 I hunted in the Moyen Congo, to the north of the Sanga River regions, and I soon understood why Kaspare had left. The conditions under which one hunted were the worst of any I had experienced in Africa. The country was sparsely populated, the people all cannibals. Their small villages were on the banks of rivers and streams navigable by canoe. Inland, and thinly scattered through the country, lived a tribe of pygmies known as the Wambinga.

The country was all dense evergreen forest with a low, heavy mist hanging over the tops of trees and it was seldom that the sun broke through. Bedding and clothing were always damp and soggy. By making fires on one of the few small areas of higher ground, clothing could be dried out but it was a waste of time for next day they would be as wet as ever. There were terrible swamps to negotiate when hunting. They consisted of mud and filthy water, knee to neck deep, which gave off a foul smell of rotting vegetation. Leeches had to be removed constantly from different parts of the body, many of them bloated through gorging on one's blood.

The forest was comparatively silent as there was little or no bird life, and to add to the eeriness there were many large bats with a wing-span of about four feet. To see one flapping its leisurely, repulsive way through a tunnel in the silent forest did little to make life cheerful. It was the most difficult country I had ever hunted in, and to make matters worse elephants were far from plentiful, their ivory small and of inferior quality.

Kaspare never built himself a permanent base camp but he put up a few temporary grass shacks at some spot and used that as his base for two or three months, then moved on somewhere else. He kept very much to himself, never made friends with any of the other hunters so that little was known about him or his affairs. Later he disappeared from the area and no one knew when or where he had gone.

Wackernie, a Frenchman, had his permanent base camp at Kadjema near where the Boku River joined the Mbomu River. Of average height he was well built and very fit. Having lived in Canada for some years he spoke English fluently and was very popular with the British

hunters. A first-class hunter, he worked hard and was reasonably successful. When the world slump hit all prices, including that of ivory, he took to native trading and did fairly well. I am not sure what became of Wackernie eventually. I did receive information that during the last World War he joined the French Free Forces and was killed in action in Syria. But whether that information was true or not I was unable to find out.

Christanger was of Swiss nationality, and like many of his countrymen he was of medium height but big-boned and strongly built. He was a quiet, friendly, unassuming man and spoke a little English. He was a good hunter and did better than average. On one of the few occasions I met him he produced a ·600 cal. bullet which he said his men had found while cutting up an elephant he had killed. The elephant was a fair sized bull with tusks of about fifty pounds each and Christanger thought it was the elephant that had killed Simpson. This may well have been the case, for Simpson had the only ·600 cal. rifle in the country, although it was possible the bullet was from some other elephant Simpson had wounded and lost. The last news I had of Christanger was that he was a well established and successful trader in Bangui.

During 1928 two more hunters named Rossi and Daly came to the Upper Ubangui region. Rossi, an Italian from northern Italy, was short, stockily built with a swarthy complexion. He was an ardent Fascist and had a rather volatile character. After Simpson's death all his personal effects were sent to Bangui to be sold and the proceeds credited to his estate. Rossi on his way up through Bangui bought Simpson's double-barrelled ·600 cal. rifle although he owned already a very good double-barrelled ·577 cal. hammer rifle. In addition, on his arrival he occupied Simpson's base camp. Until then I had never met an elephant hunter who was not superstitious to some degree or other. Among the fraternity it was generally accepted that to own and use the weapons and kit of an elephant hunter who had been killed was asking for serious trouble. Rossi was either indifferent or had never heard of the risks he was running by using a dead hunter's rifle, and I never enlightened him on any of the few occasions I met him. Whatever the reasons his hunting was not at all prosperous and he left after a year to try the Cameroons. What became of him later I never heard.

Daly was a shortish man, sturdily built with startling blue eyes,

physically and mentally as tough as they come. Most of his hunting had been done in Kenya and the Belgian Congo. Before his arrival in the Upper Ubangui region he had been with an American expedition hunting okapi in the Ituri Forest, Belgian Congo. As an elephant hunter he was fairly successful, and among the local natives he had the reputation of being an excellent shot and a good and fearless hunter. For some unknown reason he took a great dislike to Sutherland but whether the reason was professional jealousy I do not know. He had, of course, heard much about Sutherland down the years, as all of us had, but he had never previously met him. Although I had some respect for Daly as a hunter, and for his toughness, I would not have trusted him under any circumstances.

Daly made his base camp at a village some hundred miles to the north-west of Obo, situated just inside the Zemio District. Zemio was an administrative and trading post with an Adjoint Principal in charge of the District. After building his camp and settling in, Daly proceeded to make himself chief of the village in the 'monseigneur' manner. He commandeered food and porters and the only payment the villagers received was an occasional elephant Daly managed to kill within reasonable distance of the village. After a few months of this the headman and two or three elders of the village went to Zemio and laid complaints before the Adjoint Principal. By this time the French had received enquiries about Daly from the Belgians who were anxious to get hold of him for some misdemeanour in the Congo. The Adjoint, whose name was Margin, left with a platoon of African soldiers for Daly's camp. He timed his arrival to perfection. Daly was in his grass house and the first he knew of the visit was when he saw the soldiers coming up the path to his house, at the double with fixed bayonets, with the Adjoint following behind.

They caught Daly unprepared and at a disadvantage, for he had stripped the bolts of both his rifles and automatic pistol. The pieces were lying on his table about to be cleaned. From what I knew of Daly I would say that had he received even very short notice of the approaching party, he would have taken to the bush with his rifle and the Adjoint would never have taken him, at least not alive.

Daly was arrested, his hands handcuffed behind his back, his belongings packed. They left immediately for Zemio some hundred and

thirty miles away. Forced marches were made on the journey with the Adjoint, carried in a 'tepoi', bringing up the rear. With his arms handcuffed behind his back, a rope tied to one arm above the elbow, the other end of the rope held by one of the armed soldiers always guarding him, Daly was marched in this manner for four long days. The guard holding the rope attached to Daly's arm gave it a vicious jerk if he flagged; another guard gave him a blow in the back with the butt of his rifle. This caused Daly considerable pain, particularly when he was tired. At the end of each day's journey Daly was put into a circular native hut and made to sit at the base of the centre pole supporting the roof. His arms were then handcuffed behind his back around the pole and he spent the whole night in that position.

All he had to eat was one meal a day, a thick porridge made of casava meal, which he received at night. Later in the evening the Senegalese sergeant of the party came in with his own food. This consisted of chicken and rice, which had been commandeered, cooked in palm oil by a woman of the village. This is a delicious meal when well cooked and while eating his food the sergeant squatted directly in front of Daly. In between mouthfuls he waved a chicken leg or a piece of breast under Daly's nose before putting it into his own mouth and eating it, with much smacking of lips and show of enjoyment. This was a bit too much for Daly. On the third evening when the sergeant started on his performance Daly, judging the distance carefully, swung his leg sideways and kicked. The bowl of food flew across the hut scattering the contents over the earthen floor. Daly told me later that the sergeant flew into a violent rage, seized his rifle, loaded it and pointed it at Daly fully cocked. For several long seconds he thought the sergeant was going to shoot him. Such treatment from Africans would have been galling to anyone but particularly so to Daly who was a South African.

After a trial of some sort at Zemio Daly was sentenced to thirty-five days imprisonment. His rifles, about a half-ton of ivory, camera, field glasses and other possessions, as well as a sum of money, were confiscated. After his release he returned to the Obo area completely broke and the hunters there helped him out with money. Shortly afterwards he went down country to Bangui where he met a fellow South African named John Molteno, also an elephant hunter, who gave him further assistance to help him on his way to Leopoldville.

The next news I had of Daly was in Tanganyika during 1938. He was then working in a small gold mine in the Musoma District. The mine was situated at the western end of the Serengeti Plains and he got into trouble there with the Game Department over a game offence. Later he moved down into the Rhodesias and that was the last I heard of him. Of Daly's high qualities as an elephant hunter there was no doubt, but he had a remarkable flair for falling foul of the authorities in every country he went to.

The doyen of the eight elephant hunters in the Upper Ubangui region was, of course, Captain J. Sutherland. He was a Scot, a non-smoker, abstemious, of medium height, about eleven stone in weight with a tough wiry figure. Strenuous exercise is an inevitable part of a hunter's work but on the days he was not hunting Sutherland spent half an hour doing handsprings and exercises with spring dumbells. He had trained an African to massage his legs and back and this was done every evening. He took snuff occasionally and he told me that after following an elephant for many hours if he felt tired he took a pinch just before closing with the animal. He said this cleared his brain and sharpened his wits for the final effort.

Although Sutherland was in his late fifties he stood up to the arduous life as well as any of the other hunters, most of whom were much younger. During the time I was in the Upper Ubangui he headed the yearly list three or four times in weight of ivory killed by each of the hunters. It may be vain boasting on my part to say that the year he came second in the weight of ivory shot, I topped the list. I was then twenty-seven, extremely fit and tireless, whereas Sutherland was more than twice my age. This gives a measure of his quality as an elephant hunter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Captain James Sutherland

The saga or history of the early professional elephant hunter both African and European, who hunted with black powder muzzle-loading and smooth-bore weapons, is yet to be written, though I doubt if it ever will be as most of the information is now lost. The early European elephant hunters were never given the credit they deserved for the opening up of Africa, particularly the southern half of the continent. Invariably they predated the trader, missionary and professional explorer, all of whom doubtless acted largely on what those early hunters found. They were a select few, using weapons which were clumsy and inefficient compared with the modern rifle.

It is true to say that for the African and the European, except on a salary basis, the profession of elephant hunting is dead. Those few professionals who lived entirely by their rifles and skill, were a race apart and individualists to a man. It was not entirely for monetary gains, which could be high, that they worked as elephant hunters. They were a happy band, perhaps because of the free life or possibly because by the nature of their work there were times when they looked the ultimate in the face, and men who have done that without faltering have an inner and sublime contentment. It was a highly specialised profession, never overcrowded. Many men attempted it but few indeed were

able to graduate into what was probably the most select profession in the world.

French Equatorial Africa was the last country on the continent where licences were issued on which an unlimited number of elephants could be killed. When the French stopped issuing those licences in 1930 that was the end of the profession of elephant hunting. This closed an era in African history and like many milestones in history it passed unnoticed by all, except the few who were the last of a long line of professional elephant hunters.

In my estimation Sutherland was the greatest of all the elephant hunters who operated during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and until 1930 when the profession died. I realise that it is invidious and perhaps odious to compare Sutherland with any of the other greats such as Selous, Neumann, Bell, Micky Norton, Buckley, Pretorious, 'Samaki' Salmon and Pete Pearson. It is also obvious that one cannot judge entirely by the number of elephants killed by an individual hunter, but numbers do have to be taken into account.

Selous was a great hunter and a great naturalist but he was not truly a professional elephant hunter and the number of elephants he killed was comparatively small. Both Neumann and Bell did most of their elephant hunting in what may be termed virgin elephant country and they were fortunate in being the first hunters in those areas. In their books they both speak of finding large numbers of elephants, including big bulls, right out in the open in daytime. They also mentioned the brain shot and gave their reason why it was preferable. By using this shot the elephant fell dead on the spot and any other elephants nearby took little or no notice for they did not connect the report of the rifle with the fall of one of their comrades. With a heart shot, however, the elephant crashed off to die a distance away and in doing so alarmed the others. After 1920 there were very few places where elephants were not fully aware of the danger connected with the report of a rifle. It was usual for any sizeable bulls in the vicinity of where a shot had been fired to clear out of the area as fast as they could. They would sometimes travel steadily for two or three days before settling down to their normal meanderings and it would be two to three weeks before they returned to the area where they had heard the shot.

In later years a hunter was fortunate enough to come across a pocket

where elephants were unaware of what the report of a rifle shot meant, it was surprising how much easier the hunting was and how much quicker the weight of ivory obtained built up. Sutherland did find such areas during the early 1900's in southern German East Africa. On taking up elephant hunting again after serving through the First World War Sutherland never found any more such areas in which he was able to hunt, apart from one or two small pockets where the elephants were less sophisticated.

In his book *Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter*, Bell describes his expedition to the River Auk, or Bahr Aouck as he spells it. In a comparatively short time Bell had obtained as much ivory in that region as his expedition could transport out of the area. Some two to three decades later when I hunted the River Auk country there were so few elephants in the area that a hunter could not have made a living.

Buckley had the same experience on revisiting the Ubangui-Shari-Chad during 1926 after an absence of twenty years. He hunted the country on both sides of the Mbomu River between Bangassou and Rafai for three months without seeing either an elephant or even fresh spoor. The elephant position had deteriorated so much in the area since he had previously hunted there that, after hunting in the Lado Enclave, he was discouraged. So much so that he would not continue up the Mbomu River to the Upper Ubangui but returned to Kenya via the Belgian Congo. On his return to Kenya Buckley became interested in other matters and never hunted elephants again.

For some ten years before the First World War Pretorious, a South African, hunted elephants in Tanganyika or German East Africa as it was then known. As an elephant hunter he was not only very successful but quite fearless. During the 1914–18 campaign in German East Africa Pretorious served with the British forces with considerable distinction. Very few men could have carried out some of the tasks he was called upon to do. After the 1914–18 war he never hunted elephants again on his own account, although he did carry out skilfully an elephant control scheme in the Addo Bush for the South African Government.

It is possible that 'Samaki' Salmon, Pete Pearson and myself all killed more elephants than Sutherland ever did but no comparison can be made on those grounds. The greater proportion of the elephants shot by Salmon and Pearson were killed on elephant control in Uganda,

and by myself on elephant control in Tanganyika. A large percentage of elephants killed under control were cows and immature animals, whereas the elephants Sutherland hunted were bulls. Any cows he killed were incidental and shot only from sheer necessity. The difference between hunting bull elephants for ivory and shooting elephants under various Government control schemes is as different as chalk is to cheese. Shooting elephants under control requires considerable courage and the technical ability to kill elephants in numbers, often under trying conditions. It does not, however, require the hunting ability, endurance and skill which are essential for a professional elephant hunter, who is out for weight of ivory and not mere numbers. I would say it is easier to account for ten or even twelve elephants shot under control than one good tusker shot in an area that has been steadily and systematically hunted.

Sutherland started his elephant hunting career in Nyasaland in 1899. He then moved into Portuguese East Africa. He later went north into German East Africa (Tanganyika) and hunted elephants in the southern part of that territory. He was hunting there under the old open elephant licences when the Maji-Maji rebellion broke out in 1905. Serving with the German forces to repress this rebellion Sutherland acquitted himself so well that he was awarded the Iron Cross. On the outbreak of the First World War he was able to elude the German patrols sent out to arrest him, and travelling through Portuguese East Africa reached Nyasaland. There he joined the British forces as an Intelligence Officer and later became Major-General Northey's Chief Intelligence Officer. He served with distinction during the war and as well as being mentioned in dispatches was awarded the Military Cross and the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

When the war ended Sutherland held the post of Chief Intelligence Officer for the whole of East Africa, from the Rovuma River to the Abyssinia border, and was based in Nairobi. The post was a sinecure and together with the social life at Government House, Nairobi, was more than Sutherland could stand. Through the influence of Major-General Northey he was granted special elephant licences in Uganda, Belgian Congo and the Sudan. After completing those licences he went into the Upper Ubangui Province in French Equatorial Africa. He hunted elephants there until he died in 1932 at the age of sixty.

During 1930 the price of ivory fell to well below ten shilling a pound and at that price it was not possible for a hunter to do better than cover bare expenses. The weight of ivory obtained by the hunters in the Upper Ubangui varied slightly from year to year. The ratio of ivory killed by each of the hunters remained fairly steady. The most successful hunters averaged about a ton of ivory a year while the least successful averaged half that amount. The British hunters shipped their ivory in half-ton lots through the Sudan. The ivory went via a Greek agent at Wau to a bank in Khartoum and then on to John K. Gilliat and Co., in London. Gilliats were big ivory merchants and the regular ivory auctions they held were attended by buyers from all over the world. The non-British hunters sold their ivory to the larger business houses in Bangui. They did not appear to be unduly concerned about the steady depreciation in value of the franc that was then taking place.

Sutherland told me on several occasions that he would continue hunting elephants up to the end, even if it was no longer profitable. He told me also that he would die on the spoor of an elephant and hoped that this would happen before he became too old.

Early in January 1929 I left my base camp at Mutobo on the first hunt of the year. On the morning of the third day out we picked up the fairly fresh spoor of a medium-sized solitary bull. By mid-afternoon of the following day we caught up and I was able to kill him without much trouble. I decided to spend the whole of the next day near the dead elephant, cut out the tusks at leisure and replenish our stock of dried meat. Late that afternoon two of my men, accompanied by a third man and my dog, arrived from my base camp at Mutobo. The third man was a runner from Sutherland carrying a message from him saying he had been poisoned. Sutherland's runner had arrived at my base camp on the afternoon of the day after I left.

On receiving Sutherland's message I left immediately with his runner, one of my trackers and four porters carrying my bed-roll and a few essentials. The rest of my men stayed behind with the dead elephant to finish drying the meat and cutting out the tusks. They were told to return direct to my base camp at Mutobo when that work was finished.

We headed for Sutherland's camp and after travelling as hard as we

could reached there after three days. When I arrived Sutherland was in rather a poor condition physically as a result of the poison. Both his legs were partly paralysed, he had a facial twitch, his nerves were in a bad state and he was obviously suffering from shock. Beyond keeping him company and trying to cheer him up there was little I could do for him.

The poison he had been given is made from the tips of the buds of a species of flame tree common to that part of Africa. It is tasteless and colourless and its effect is to paralyse the nervous system. Starting at the extremities the paralysis eventually reaches the nerve centres, causing death within four to six hours. Sutherland had been given the poison in his tea, and fortunately for him it was just after he had eaten his lunch. On feeling his legs becoming paralysed he sensed what had happened and was able to vomit his lunch with most of the poison.

I suggested that a 'tepoi' be made out of one of his camp chairs so that he could be carried to Yubo on the Sudan border but he refused. Yubo was a sleeping sickness station established for the treatment of that disease and two doctors were permanently stationed there. After I had been at his camp for six days he had recovered so well that we were able to travel together to Obo. There a complaint was laid before the new Adjoint, a Monsieur Pillet. The Adjoint investigated the case and the result was that a sub-chief named Basibiri and three other Africans received long terms of imprisonment. Sutherland never fully recovered from the effects of the poison and his left leg remained partly paralysed. In spite of this physical handicap and general ill health he continued to hunt elephants.

Sutherland's prediction that he would die on the spoor of an elephant almost came true. During June 1932, after more than thirty years of elephant hunting, and while on the spoor of what turned out to be his last elephant, he went down with his final illness. He was carried out of the bush by his men to Yubo and the doctors there did what they could to help him. Shortly after reaching Yubo Sutherland died and was buried the same day with military honours. And so he died, a true gentleman and the greatest of elephant hunters. A few of his friends and fellow hunters subscribed for a headstone for the grave. The stone was in the form of a wall or plinth, made of large blocks of stone, surmounted by a stone cross, all rough hewn. Over the plinth is a bronze tablet.

The inscription reads:

TO THE MEMORY OF
THAT
GREAT ELEPHANT HUNTER
JIM SUTHERLAND
WHO DIED AT YUBO ON JUNE 26, 1932
AGED 60 YEARS
ERECTED BY A FEW FRIENDS AND
FELLOW HUNTERS

Of the earlier professional elephant hunters so little is known. The great majority of them are completely forgotten, for there is nothing about their exploits on record. It is said that two elephant hunters separately reached the Victoria Falls on the Zambesi River before Dr. Livingstone and that may well be true. Sutherland mentioned to me the names of a few elephant hunters who were well established when he first started hunting in the 1890's. Unfortunately I did not record their names or make notes of their achievements.

During 1926 I was told about one of these earlier hunters by the Sultan Hetman at Rafai, Upper Ubangui. The Sultan Hetman's country was roughly the size of an ordinary administrative district and he administered it in the form of a protectorate under the French. At that time Hetman was a man between fifty-five and sixty years and spoke fluent French. He told me that the first white man to visit Rafai was an English elephant hunter named Baldwin. Hetman was then a boy under ten years old and as Baldwin was the first white man he had ever seen he was greatly impressed. Apart from his different way of living what impressed Hetman most was Baldwin's light coloured hair, fair skin and blue eyes.

Some thirty years prior to 1926 the then Major Marchand had passed through Rafai with a column of troops on his way to the Sudan. Hetman was given by his father to Major Marchand as a hostage and also to act as his servant. He was then a young man and accompanied Marchand to the Sudan and was present when Marchand and Kitchener met at Fashoda. The whole of that operation was known as the 'Fashoda Affair' and took place in 1898.

It was more than fifteen years before the 'Fashoda Affair' that

Baldwin passed through Rafai and that would make the year somewhere in the early 1880's. Hetman said that Baldwin had a large quantity of ivory with him but he did not know whether he had reached the Upper Ubangui from the east via Uganda or the Sudan. Neither did Hetman know whether Baldwin ever reached the west coast but he thought it was unlikely as the people lower down the Mbomu River were a bad lot at that time and addicted to cannibalism. The local people of Rafai were little better. Three or four years after Major Marchand came back from Fashoda and had returned to the west coast, four Hollanders arrived at Rafai and opened a trading store. A few months later they were all murdered and eaten.

News of a European being murdered and eaten by a paramount chief was bound to spread, and other chiefs would do likewise, should the opportunity occur, if only for reasons of local prestige. I like to think that Baldwin got through safely to the west coast with his ivory and did not end up like the unfortunate Hollanders. On the other hand, like many other early elephant hunters, he may have just disappeared without trace in what was then darkest Africa.

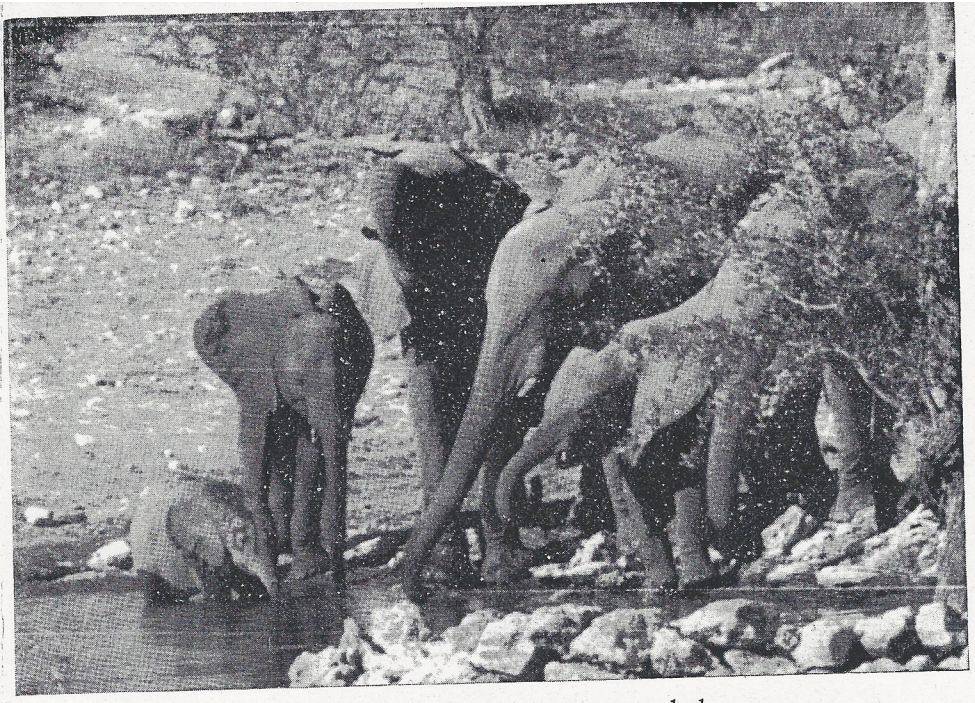
CHAPTER TWELVE

The Serengeti National Park

One of the most interesting and worth while duties of a Game Ranger in Tanganyika was that of game conservation. As the Tanganyika Game Department was so lightly staffed the Game Rangers concentrated their efforts on preserving game in the reserves. This was considered preferable, for the size of each range was so great that it was physically impossible for a ranger and his scouts adequately to protect the game in more than a quarter of the territory for which he was responsible.

The creation and maintenance of National Parks and Game Reserves in Africa is essential, not only for the preservation of game animals—which in itself is an adequate reason—but also for the benefit of the human inhabitants of the country. The natural increase of game animals within such sanctuaries overflow into outside areas and in this way the needs of the legitimate sportsman are met. Also this overflow is a source of meat supply for a meat hungry, indigenous population, particularly in tsetse fly country. If a rational form of game cropping, based on scientific lines, were introduced in the areas surrounding some of the game sanctuaries much could be done to improve the protein deficient diet of local inhabitants.

Prior to their formation most of the National Parks of East Africa had been Game Reserves. The changeover was acclaimed as a great step



Elephant cows and calves at a water-hole.

The ground hornbill is common in elephant country. His deep, sonorous and melancholy call is usually heard at dawn.

forward so far as the preservation of game for posterity was concerned. The running of the Parks is carried out by an independent Board of Trustees with perpetual succession and a Common Seal. The Park Wardens and others working in a Park are directly responsible to the Board of Trustees, not to the Executive of the Government, and the Board may dismiss such employees at their discretion. The boundaries of the National Parks were decreed inviolate and could not be changed except by the Governor, with the consent of the Legislative Council of the Territory and the Park Trustees.

Game Reserves on the other hand, although giving an equal degree of protection to game animals as National Parks, came under the control of the Executive Authority in Government. The Governor in Council could abolish a Game Reserve or change its boundaries on or against the advice of the Game Warden. The Game Wardens of East Africa were Government servants and their advice was not always accepted by the Executive.

The public in East Africa and throughout the world who were interested when they heard of the formation of National Parks, for they believed they were sacrosanct and would remain so in perpetuity. This was not to be, the Serengeti National Park, which was probably the most important Park in Africa, was carved up and the more important sections, from a scenic and game point of view, were handed to the Masaio. Other National Parks and Game Reserves have gone the same way.

The great weakness of the Serengeti National Park, other National Parks and some Game Reserves is that they contain human inhabitants; in some cases their domestic stock as well. Any attempt to improve water supplies in the sactuaries for the benefit of game by means of weirs, furrows and dams had the opposite effect. The increase in water supplies meant an increase in domestic stock to the detriment of game. The worst offenders were flocks of sheep.

The annual migration of game across the central Serengeti Plains was one of the wonders of the world and had to be seen to be fully appreciated. Many estimates have been made of the number of animals taking part in such migrations and figures varied from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands. The major species were wildebeest, zebra and Thomson's gazelle, but the wildebeest predominated. No systematic

counts were instituted until after 1955. By that time the number of game animals had been greatly reduced and the numbers that previously took part in that mighty yearly movement is unknown.

When travelling the wildebeest formed themselves into compact columns allowing a few feet space around each animal and the larger columns were up to three miles long and half a mile wide. In the early 1930's I cut across one of these columns in my truck. I had to travel in extra low gear and it took me half an hour to get across, the wildebeest continually bumping into the side of the truck. The wildebeest moved with a purposeful manner, a more than usually stupid expression on their faces, their heads held low. There was little or no cavorting on the edges of the columns and each animal made an occasional grunting noise. The sound made by two or three thousand wildebeest all grunting at the same time was considerable and could be heard a long distance away.

After travelling in this manner for a large part of the day the column halts and spreads out. They graze and rest for two or three hours before reforming and continuing their journey. The zebra and Thomson's gazelle travelled in large herds also, but they kept a looser and more irregular formation. Following on the heels of the large herds came the lions, hyenas, jackals and wild hunting dogs and they took their toll of the others as and when necessary.

Seasonal migration was common to plains game in all parts of East Africa and took place in areas where they were found in numbers. A good example in Tanganyika was the country bordering the Ugalla River where there were large pools of water throughout the dry season. Large numbers of game concentrated there during the latter half of the dry season but they moved from the river as soon as the rains started and went far away into the miombo woodland. Nowhere in Africa was there game migration which ever approached the scale of the Serengeti Plains.

Game has evolved a form of pasture management far superior to anything evolved by man and his domestic stock in Africa. Towards the end of the dry season plains game is concentrated on the dry-season grazing grounds near permanent water. After the onset of the rains they leave these pastures completely within a matter of two or three days, regardless of the fact that there may still be ample grazing left in

the area. The game do not return until the following dry season and this allows the pastures to rest and to seed. The game moves away in search of young fresh grass, and with occasional showers filling shallow surface pools together, with new green grazing the game is independent of permanent water. It is at this period that the majority of the species of plains game calve. This arrangement allows the gravid females new and good grazing so that they can suckle their calves adequately. In addition it gives tender grazing to the young when weaned.

The conception of the Serengeti National Park had one great fault and it was impossible for any Government to pass legislation to remove the fault. The fault is that, apart from the Ngorongo Crater and its immediate surrounding highland forests, plus a small area around Banagi in the west, there is little or no permanent game within the Serengeti National Park. For this reason the vast migratory movements of game on the Serengeti Plains are doomed and this would have happened even had the Park retained its original area of four thousand eight hundred square miles before being carved up.

During normal wet seasons the migration of plains game starts during November and game move into the Park from all points of the compass to the focal point, which was the central and east central Serengeti Plains. Except for a small and insignificant proportion all the migratory game come from outside the Park's original boundaries. The game come from the west in Lake Victoria area, from the north-west where there is a link with Kenya game animals, and from the south and south-west. Others come from the Natron Game Reserve and the Ngassarai furrow both in the north-east. Large numbers move up the Rift Wall from the Rift Valley and east of Lake Manyara, and further east from the Tarangire River region and the eastern Masai plains. Towards the end of the wet season the return migratory movement of game starts and by June the central Serengeti Plains are completely devoid of game, with the exception of the occasional Thomson's gazelle.

The migratory movement has now slowed down to a mere trickle and in a few more years it will stop altogether. The reason is twofold. The first being the big increase in population and domestic stock, plus the large-scale poaching of game by Africans in the north-west, the west and south-west areas outside the Park. The second is the great

increase in Masai domestic stock, particularly small stock, with the result that the grazing is fully utilised in those areas lying to the north-east, east and south-east of the Park.

The poaching carried out in the areas lying outside the western end of the Park was on a large scale. There were many gangs of poachers and the methods they used were particularly fiendish. A gang would build a low brushwood fence, thigh to waist high, a mile or more long. At six- or seven-foot intervals along the full length of the fence gaps were left and in these snares made of strong rope or wire cable were placed. When there was a sufficient number of game animals in the immediate vicinity the poachers formed a loose semicircle around the animals, the fence forming the base of the semicircle. By yelling, firing muzzle loaders and making much noise, at the same time closing in on the game, they stampeded the animals towards the low brushwood fence.

On reaching the fence the animals made for the gaps in the fence and so became entangled in the snares. The poachers then started on slaughtering them. To skin and cut up a large game animal, carry the meat to their nearby camp and place it on the smoke racks took time. It usually happened that the poachers snared more game animals than they could cope with in a few days. They only killed the animals as and when they could deal with the cutting up of each carcase and carrying the meat to the drying racks. To have killed all of them at once meant that a large proportion of the meat would go bad before it was dealt with.

The method the poachers used to prevent this was to hamstring all the animals caught in the snares. This stopped the frantic struggles of the animals to break loose but allowed them sufficient movement to keep off the vultures that were either hovering overhead, standing around on the ground or sitting in trees biding their time to move in and clean up a carcase. Hamstringing also allowed the animals to live until it was their turn to be slaughtered. This kind of poaching was carried out on a large scale and most of the gangs had their lorries, or Land-Rovers with trailers, to convey the dried meat to different centres for sale.

To the east, north-east and south-east of the Serengeti National Park lie the great open plains of Masailand. There the Masai live with their

large herds of cattle and small-stock. They are probably the greatest cattlemen of any tribe in Africa. Until the mid 1930's plains game was plentiful and evenly distributed throughout the whole of the open plains of Masailand. There was no serious competition between Masai domestic stock and game; neither did the Masai kill game animals or eat game meat. The number of livestock owned by the Masai was controlled entirely by the amount of water available in the dry season and not by the amount of available grazing. The Masai had worked out a system of rotational grazing very similar to that used by game animals and it could well be that they had learned the method from game.

Towards the end of the dry season the Masai cattle were concentrated on their permanent wells and water holes. At the onset of the rains the stock was moved out to the limits of their grazing lands and surface water was sufficient for them. With the rains over and as the dry season advanced the Masai retreated with their cattle to the semi-permanent water holes and, finally, to their permanent wells and holes. No matter how well organised the watering arrangements were it was possible to water only a limited number of cattle during a day. It was this factor that controlled the number of livestock.

In the 1930's one or two Government departments put forward plans for the building of earth dams in Masailand. It was agreed at top level to go ahead with a dam-building programme and a number were in fact built. During the 1940's and 1950's the building programme was stepped up considerably. The dams were well built and well sited from an engineering point of view, and one or two of them could hold water for three years or longer, even if the rains failed completely. What were the true reasons behind this extensive dam-building project is hard to know. It may have been a genuine effort to improve stock-raising conditions in Masailand or it may have been a means of self aggrandisment by a few senior Government officials. The number of dams built, and the acre feet of water they provided, made inspiring reading in the departmental reports and in the Territory's annual report to the United Nations.

The whole of the Masailand dam-building project must be subject to suspect. It was known that water supplies alone, and not the amount of grazing, were the controlling factor regarding the number of livestock the Masai owned, but no measures were taken to control the number

of livestock when the water supplies were increased. No ecological survey of Masailand was made and the results of the whole of that mistaken and misguided effort was worsened by the fact that the Veterinary Department had eradicated rinderpest in Masailand. Until then rinderpest had acted as a form of biological control over the number of cattle. The idea of selling surplus stock is entirely foreign and repugnant to the Masai for the simple reason that in his own opinion it is not possible to have surplus cattle, nor does he have any wish to change his way of life. After paying his poll tax and any court fines for cattle raiding, buying a supply of grain and an occasional second-hand overcoat for himself, any surplus cash from the proceeds of the few cattle sold is taken in shilling coins which are placed in empty paraffin tins and buried. The number of tins full of shillings that are buried throughout Masailand is considerable, and that is all the use the Masai have for money.

The following incident shows what little value the Masai place on money. Over the years the Tanganyika Veterinary Department worked very hard to eradicate rinderpest in the territory and in 1945 they thought they had done so. The Kenya authorities did very little about the disease except in the Highlands where there was valuable pedigree stock. For the rest of the country the disease was allowed to take its own course. The Masai take little notice of the Tanganyika–Kenya territory boundary and crossed at will with their stock as and when they wished. During 1945 a number of Masai from eastern Masailand crossed into Kenya with their herds and grazed them in the Taveta area. There was a flare up of rinderpest around Taveta and the Masai immediately started to move their cattle back south across the border through the Ngulu Gap, to the Ruvu River area. Two other officers and myself were sent to intercept the herds and turn them back. I was able to catch up with one large herd and told the owners that they had to go back as the Government feared they would reintroduce rinderpest into Tanganyika Masailand.

They agreed they were running away from the rinderpest around Taveta and that possibly there was some infection in their cattle. After some discussion I was offered two four-gallon paraffin tins of shillings if I would allow them to continue with their cattle. On refusing, the Masai raised the bribe to six tins and I am sure they would have gone

even higher had they not seen that bribery would not get their herds through. Knowing the Masai as I did I had no doubt they would have produced the number of tins of shillings agreed upon had I accepted the bribe. I do not know how many shillings a four-gallon tin will hold but it must amount to a lot of money. To the Masai money was quite valueless when placed in the balance against the welfare of their beloved cattle.

The result of this great increase in cattle, and particularly small-stock, is that the grazing throughout Masailand is fully utilised by the domestic stock. The sweet grasses and herbs which were plentiful on these vast pasture lands were eaten out and then eradicated by the herds of cattle and vast flocks of sheep. The tough, wiry grass that was left is eaten by domestic stock but unpalatable to plains game animals. This caused the game to leave those areas and they have simply vanished. The disappearance of game from the great open areas of Masailand is complete and the eradication has been even more effective than the poaching activities in the areas surrounding the western end of the Serengeti National Park.

Chronic overstocking proved not only disastrous to plains game but its evil effect is becoming apparent in Masailand in another manner. Desert conditions are creeping in over several areas. Dust storms are frequent and bad and around Engaruka and other places sand dunes are forming. The only bright spot that may develop is that some of the dams show signs of silting up. The sooner a number of dams silt up completely and rinderpest becomes endemic again the better it will be for game animals, the Masai, their land, and their cattle.

To make it even more difficult for some of the pitiful remnants of game to make the annual migration from the east to join that once vast concourse of game animals on the central Serengeti Plains, was the opening up of large tracts of land in the Rift Valley for settlement. The settled area is a solid block of land some sixty miles long in the Rift Valley running northwards from Babati. It takes up all the land lying between the Rift Wall on the eastern shores of Lake Manyara and the Great North Road. This forms an effective barrier to the migration of game from eastern Masailand and the Tarangire regions. The great tragedy of the Serengeti and its once vast herds of migratory plains game draws to a close.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Game Reserves

Of the eight Game Reserves in Tanganyika, a total area of 22,789 square miles, only two, the Selous and the Rungwa River Game Reserves, hold out any real long-term possibilities as true and complete game sanctuaries. The Selous Game Reserve is 11,512 square miles and the Rungwa River Reserve is 7,822 square miles in area. The size of those two reserves allows for the seasonal movements of the plains game animals within their boundaries and both have adequate permanent water. Another thing in their favour is that both have tsetse flies throughout and this precludes the encroachment of domestic stock. The Selous Reserve has no human inhabitants and the Rungwa Reserve has so few that it would be possible to arrange for their resettlement outside the reserve.

The Selous Game Reserve, originally created by the Germans before 1912, is the central point of the many elephant in the Eastern and Southern Provinces. It carries large numbers of buffalo, and these sections of the Greater Ruaha and Rufiji Rivers inside the reserve are full of hippopotami. When the rivers are low during the dry season the schools of hippo packed tightly in the numerous pools are an incredible sight. Over a period of years, usually six years, the hippo breed to such an extent that during the dry season they eat out all the grazing within range of permanent water. This causes such a shortage of food

that many die of starvation and so restore a balance again. The hippo has few natural enemies and they appear to be immune to all animal diseases. Although crocodiles live in the same waters I have never known or heard of a crocodile attacking a hippo, not even a calf. A hippo, particularly a big bull, in water of sufficient depth would be more than a match for a crocodile.

Lions have been known to attack hippo, but this rarely happens and a lion must be very hard-pressed with hunger to attempt to kill such a formidable and courageous opponent. Such attacks do take place and I once saw the skin of a lion that had been killed by a hippo. The African who brought in the skin said that the ground where the fight had taken place was much trampled and torn up, with a considerable amount of blood about. The lion was lying dead, with two large holes in either flank, having been bitten across its back, I don't think a lion could survive if it received a bite on any part of its body from a hippo, for the hippo has extremely powerful wide opening jaws armed with four fearsome teeth, two on the upper and two on the lower jaw.

Lions attack lone buffaloes much more frequently than they attack hippo. I have shot two or three solitary buffalo bulls on separate occasions which carried long, deep scars on their backs and flanks where they had been raked by an attacking lion's claws. Those bulls were proof that lions are not always successful when they attack a buffalo. On scenting or sighting a lion a herd of buffalo will never stampede as do herds of other soft-skin game animals. Instead, they take up a formation showing a front of menacing horns backed by weight, muscle and considerable courage. Even the hungriest of lions will not attack under those conditions.

When I was Game Ranger in charge of the Eastern Province a large section of the Selous Game Reserve came under my control. The reserve receives its name because that great hunter, F. C. Selous, lies buried there. The grave is situated at Sogomero near Behobeho and close to a footpath that runs from Kisaki through that part of the Reserve to Mpanga on the Rufiji River. This section of the reserve is totally uninhabited and Selous lies alone not far from the spot where he was killed in action during the 1914–18 war. Others were killed in that action and they were also buried there at the same time. After the war the War Graves Commission collected the bodies of dead soldiers

from temporary graves deep in the bush in different parts of Tanganyika, and brought them to be re-buried at central cemeteries where their graves could be cared for. When the bodies of those soldiers killed in the battle at Behobeho were moved it was decided to leave Selous where he lay. Whoever the person was in the War Graves Commission who made the decision, he must have been someone of considerable understanding. It is certain that Selous, the great hunter and naturalist, would have prefered to lie in the heart of a Game Reserve rather than in a crowded cemetery.

Whenever I was in that part of the reserve I always visited the solitary grave. The gravestone was a solid rectangular slab of concrete with a tablet firmly attached to the top. The tablet read:

CAPTAIN
F. C. SELOUS, D.S.O.
25 ROYAL FUSILIERS
KILLED IN ACTION 4.1.17

The grave lies in a fairly open plain with clumps of thicket and single scrub trees dotted here and there. The following extract from my diary written on one of my visits gives a good idea of the place where Selous lies.

15th Wednesday, March 1939

Left Ngerengwa and safari-d into Selous Reserve. Saw two herds of elephants and two single bulls both with tusks of about sixty pounds each. Numerous buffalo. Other game seen Nyasa wildebeest, Ellipsipryma waterbuck, impalla, warthog, eland and five lions. All tame particularly the buffalo. Arrived Behobeho one p.m. Found water by digging in river bed. Camped.

16th Thursday, March

Elephant around camp most of night. Left at dawn. Saw two lions, numerous buffalo in fairly large herds. Wildebeest and impala numerous. Waterbuck and hartebeest. Many warthogs and a large number of old bull buffalos in two's and threes. Visited Selous' grave and tidied it up a bit, removing elephant droppings from the top of the grave and around the side. Some of the droppings were fresh. Then dug away the grass roots around the concrete slab. While taking a snapshot of the grave a solitary old bull buffalo, some

hundred yards away, stood watching as if he were guardian of the grave. There were elephants in a thicket about two hundred yards away and one of them trumpeted. Selous is in good company.

Reached Rufiji River one p.m. and crossed by canoe to Mpanga Village.

The greater part of the Rungwa River Game Reserve lies in the Southern Highlands Province of Tanganyika. Before being considerably extended this reserve was known as the Saba River Reserve and the area was made into a reserve by the Germans before 1914. For several years I was stationed in the Southern Highlands Province Range as Senior Game Ranger and after two or three years of scheming and effort I was able to get this reserve extended.

The new reserve, gazetted in 1951, was almost double in size. The extension area had only a few human inhabitants, contained tsetse throughout and is poor agricultural land. Water is plentiful throughout the year with many possibilities of increasing those supplies. The show of game in the reserve was good, and compared to the Serengeti there are many more species of game animals and this makes game watching more interesting. The reserve is now of sufficient size to form an ecological whole and it will not be necessary for the game animals to make seasonal migrations to areas outside the reserve as is necessary in the case of some reserves of too small an area.

The Rungwa Game Reserve is the southern limit of the range in East Africa of the Grant's gazelle, Lesser Kudu and ostrich. There is an adequate elephant population and I believe the biggest average size of tusks among bulls in Tanganyika is now to be found there.

Whilst patrolling in the western section of the reserve in 1950 I discovered two sets of rock drawings and a well. When I say 'discovered' I mean they had not previously been seen by a European although the local Africans knew all about them. One of the rock drawings is on the back wall of a shallow cave in a chateau-like rocky outcrop named Makungure or, alternatively, Jiwi wa Wandiki. It is about two hours' walk due east of Isanga Village and near to the junction of the Itambi and Njombe Rivers. Some thirty miles south-west of Isanga Village on a rocky hill named Nyona, near the source of the Malomba stream, is another set of rock drawings. The womenfolk of the local people are

forbidden to go anywhere near the drawings. Both sets of drawings appear to have been done by the same people. The pigment is black and there are pictures of several animals including giraffe and zebra. The people in the drawings are depicted by line or stick drawings as sometimes drawn by children and they are shown wearing a kilt. Although primitive the standard of art is high.

In the same region near a hill named Tundumkula, some six hours' walk north of Isanga Village, is a well holding permanent water. The well is quite deep, has never been used by the local people and is very similar to the wells in Masailand. It was probably dug by the engineers of the same race of forgotten people who dug the Masai wells. So far as is known these rock drawings and the well are the most southerly of any as yet discovered in East Africa.

Apart from the Selous and Rungwa complete reserves there are no others at present in Tanganyika that will stand the test of time. The other reserves are either too small in area or contain African settlements, and in some cases domestic stock as well. The only other suitable area available, and it could be advantageously made into a National Park or complete Game Reserve, is the Lake Rukwa Game Controlled Area with an area of 3,768 square miles. The north Rukwa Valley is a vast open grassland plain with the appearance of having once been a lake. It has well defined natural boundaries and as far as game is concerned it is an ecological whole.

Not only is it outstandingly suitable as a complete sanctuary for game but also for bird life. Some twenty-four species of game animals and about four hundred species of birds, including countless numbers of waterfowl, are found in the area. It is a breeding ground for flamingoes, and in the southern lake at certain seasons there are uncountable numbers of pelicans. The pelicans live on the tilapia fish which are found in the lake in large quantities.

I never tired of watching the pelicans carry out their fishing operations. Flights of them, each about a hundred strong, would form into a deep arc with each of the birds some two to three feet apart. Moving ahead with the two prongs of the arc leading they kept perfect formation like a battle fleet of well drilled sailing ships. At some given signal which I was never able to discern all the birds simultaneously dipped

their heads and necks deep into the water to catch fish. Their recovery was sometimes a little irregular but they quickly regained perfect formation, sailed along for five to ten minutes then altogether again dip their heads and necks into the water.

Lake Rukwa is the south-eastern range limit in Tanganyika of the East African giraffe, topi and bohor reedbuck, none of which occur in Northern Rhodesia. It is one of the two regions left in Tanganyika where the puku occurs, the other place being the Kilombero Valley. They used to be found on the Mwaya flats on the shores of north Lake Nyasa but owing to the great increase in population and the whole of the flats used for rice cultivation, the puku have now disappeared. Game in the Rukwa area was sadly reduced through the wholesale slaughter by Africans, particularly during the mating season. Largely due to the efforts of Mr. L. Vesey-Fitzgerald, an honorary Game Ranger and an acknowledged naturalist of considerable standing, the heavy poaching was almost entirely eliminated. The result was that the game made a wonderful recovery and, provided the same degree of protection is continued, it will only take a few years to bring the numbers back to what they were in the 1920's.

Apart from protection, the two main problems of the plains area are water supplies during the very bad droughts sometimes experienced, and the cycles of high flooding. What surface water remains during the droughts, and much of the subteranean water, is too saline to be drinkable. Sweet water has been found at shallow depths at several places on the plains and this could be developed at small cost for the benefit of game. It is reasonable to assume that other supplies of sweet water could be found by prospecting. Thanks to a high water-table, dry season grazing is not a problem and by pasture management through controlled and rotational burning it could be greatly improved.

The northern Rukwa plains is mainly grassland with a number of islands of short sweet grass dotted about here and there amongst the high elephant grass. These islands of short grass are occupied by the topi, particularly during the wet season. From 1950 to 1954 there was a threefold increase in the number of topi and this brought a considerable increase in the areas of short grass. With continued protection of topi, plus carefully planned burning of high coarse grass, the acreage of short grass could be increased still further.

The Rukwa Valley is a breeding place for the red locust. The locusts remain static in numbers over a period of time and then build up into swarms which leave the valley and create havoc with food crops over a large part of Africa. To deal with them the International Red Locust Organisation was formed and their main concern was to prevent, by various means, the locusts building up their numbers into large swarms. Mr. Vesey-Fitzgerald, a scientist with the I.R.L.C. found that the increase of topi brought about an increase in the acreage of short grass areas on the plains and those areas are now occupied sparsely by locusts. There are several species of birds that prey on the locusts and they can more readily catch locusts in short grass areas than in high elephant grass. These birds can be an important factor in locust control.

The cycles of high flooding that occur, with each cycle covering a number of years, causes part of the northern plains to become a large lake. This periodic flooding does not cause any serious inconvenience to game. To the north, north-east and east are large areas of sparsely populated miombo woodland to which game can migrate during the wet season. Lorries and Land-Rovers could not be used in such regions during the rains, and as the game would be widely scattered over large uninhabited areas the attrition caused by muzzle loader hunters would be negligible. At the end of the rains the game could return to the Rukwa Valley and as the lake receded, due to the high rate of evaporation plus the results of pasture management, there would be ample grazing.

No records have been kept of the cycles of high flooding in the Rukwa Valley. Similar cycles of rise and fall of water levels have occurred in other lakes in central Africa and so far as I know no satisfactory scientific reason has yet been given as to why they occur. The mid 1930's was the last high-water period in Rukwa and the north lake was full and navigable by large motor-boats. By 1950 the north lake was quite dry, the south lake had greatly receeded and had become very shallow.

The local African theory regarding the cause of these periodic cycles of flooding is interesting. Many, many years ago a German explorer contracted an illness and died in the Rukwa Valley where he was buried by his men. According to native folklore the dead German develops a terrific thirst every now and then and drinks up the water in the lake.

Regardless of what rains may fall the lake level continues to drop until the German's thirst is fully assuaged. When that is achieved the lake gradually fills up until the German gets his enormous thirst again and the level of the lake begins to drop again. It is as good an explanation of this phenomenon as any of the others I have heard.

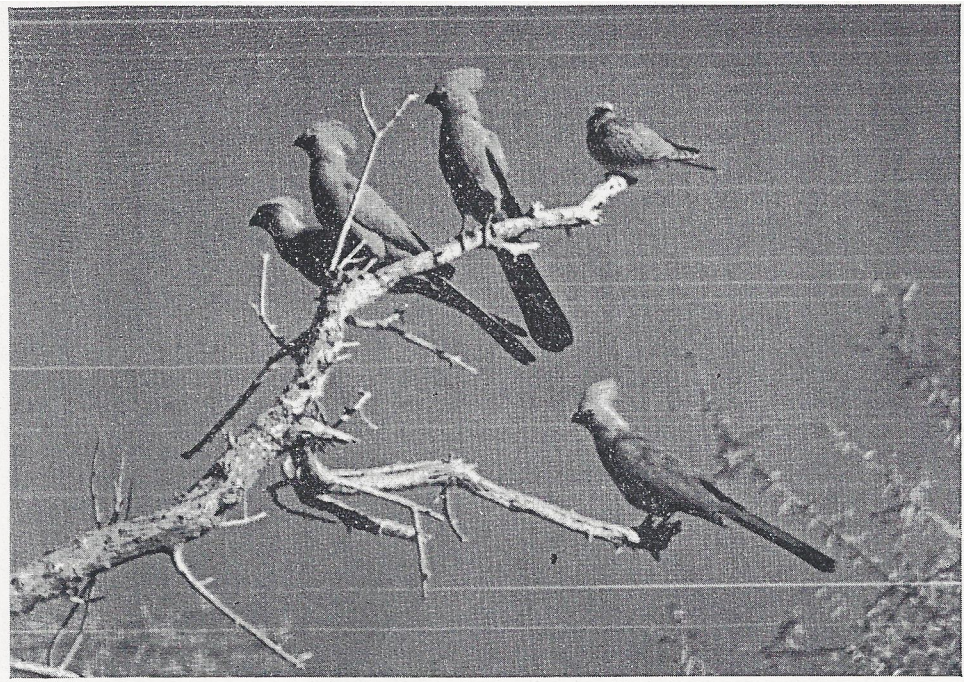
One of the outstanding features of the Rukwa Valley is Kwimba mountain situated on the south-eastern edge of the valley. It a flat-top table mountain, similar in appearance to Table Mountain, Cape Town, but much smaller. Kwimba dominates the whole of that part of Rukwa Valley lying to the west and north-west. On clear days it can easily be seen from a distance of sixty or seventy miles away.

The tribe living in the southern part of the valley is called the Wambungu, and Kwimba mountain lies within their country. The headquarters of the tribe is at Wungu and their chief is always known as the Mwiniwungu. The Wambungu cultivate the rich, flat alluvial lands and it is said there is much fine alluvial gold in those lands, brought down from the Lupa Gold Fields by the Lupa and Sira Rivers. The southern lake, which has never been known to dry up, is rich in fish life and the Wambungu are skilled fishermen.

Kwimba mountain is considered sacred by the locals and they bury their chiefs in its caves. Very few Europeans have been up the mountain for it is impossible to get a local tribesman to act as guide. Normally only certain elders and 'wise men' are allowed up the mountain. Even these privileged persons had to take certain precautions otherwise disaster would overtake them. To make the ascent in safety it was necessary to be naked. A piece of red cloth had to be carried otherwise some searing flame would consume the climber. Should a snake be encountered en route one calls out 'Kamba' (meaning rope) and the snake will get out of the way. If a buffalo is met with the word to be spoken loudly is 'Ngombe' (cow) and the buffalo will make way. The password for a leopard was 'Mpaka' (cat), for a lion 'Mbwa' (dog).

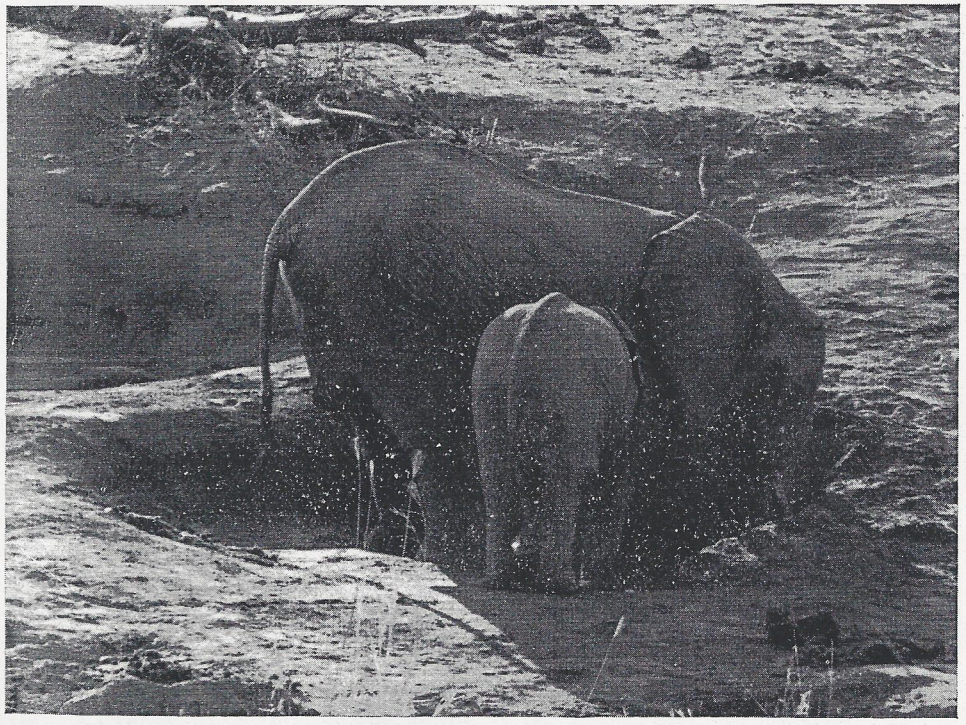
The mountain runs roughly north and south and at the north end is a sheer precipice having a drop of about seven hundred to eight hundred feet with jagged outcrops of rock at the bottom. In the very early days human sacrifices were made here and executions carried out

by throwing people over the precipice. Pure white oxen and goats were also sacrificed in the same manner. As late as the mid 1930's white oxen and goats were sent for this purpose by the Mwinamwanga and Wanyika tribes who live on the south-western and western sides of the Lake Rukwa Valley.

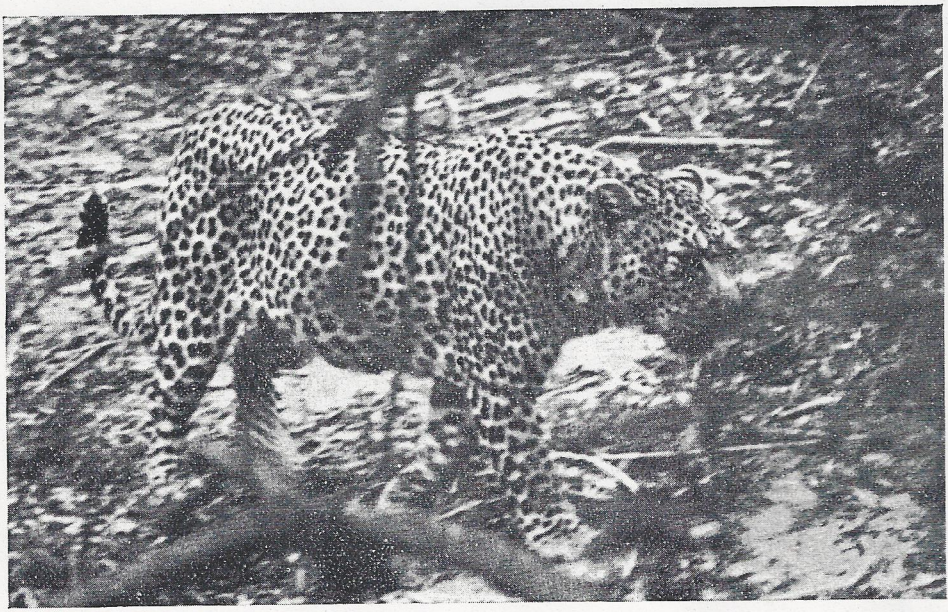


A group of go away birds. These will often follow the hunter and alarm the quarry with their call.

A cow elephant and her calf digging for water in a dry river bed.



A herd of impalla around a waterhole.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Man-eating Leopards

It has been my experience that leopards rarely turn man-eaters more than lions. Lions, when they turn man-eater, make human flesh their staple diet and will only kill and eat game or domestic stock when driven by extreme hunger. The killing and eating of humans by man-eating leopards is more spasmodic and in some cases they stop killing humans for lengthy periods. Man-eating leopards always mix their diet of human flesh with that of game. The possible reason for this difference between man-eating lions and man-eating leopards is that the main, and favourite, diet of leopards is baboon and monkey and one may assume that the flesh of those simians has some affinity to that of humans.

Possibly human flesh has some special quality as described to me many years ago in the French Congo by an elderly African who still practised cannibalism. We discussed the virtues of human flesh *contra* game meat. There was no domestic stock or dogs in the area because of tsetse fly and the only game animals were gorilla, chimpanzee, yellow-backed duiker, monkeys and elephants, all of which were few and far between. I asked this old cannibal why he preferred human meat to that of game. He replied, 'There is no comparison at all. There are streaks of fat running through the lean meat. It tastes better and is much sweeter than elephant meat or any other meat including gorilla and

chimpanzee. Also, as you know, when you place a piece of elephant meat in a pot to boil, it just lies there at the bottom of the pot like a stone while it is being cooked—it is quite dead. But if you boil a piece of human meat it bumps and bounces around and jigs about in the pot; it has life.'

The worst recorded case of man-eating leopards occurred on the Uwanje Plateau. This large plateau, also known as the Elton Plateau, is situated in the western part of the Njombe District, Southern Highlands Province, Tanganyika. It is over eight thousand feet high. The western and north-western sides are fairly sheer, similar to the Rift Wall in the Northern Province. The range of mountains overlooks the Great North Road from Chimala to Igawa and the Usanga Plains. Near Igawa the range swings eastward in the direction of Njombe, the Administrative Headquarters of the District.

There was a fairly large leopard population inhabiting the precipitous slopes of these mountains with an adequate supply of natural food for the leopards in the form of baboons, vervet monkeys, dik-dik antelopes and other small game. From 1945 to 1953 I was the Senior Game Ranger in charge of game matters in the Southern Highlands Province. In every year during that period the number of Africans killed and eaten, or partly eaten, by leopards on the Plateau averaged fifteen to twenty per year. The pattern of killing was the same every year. There would be a sudden spate of killing after which prompt action was taken against the leopards. After four or five leopards had been accounted for by trapping and hunting, deaths would suddenly stop.

As with many cases of man-eating carnivora, this one was bedevilled by witchcraft and ritual murders. All of which makes it difficult to find out the truth and get to the bottom of these cases. The witch-doctor concerned with these man-eaters was Mwamboneke bin Faramagoha who lived in the Kipengere area of the Uwanje Plateau. This man received tribute from the local people because they believed he could control the movements and actions of the leopards in the area. On learning of this, and in view of the fact that during the previous year (1950) there had been ritual murders on the Uwanje Plateau, I reported the matter to the police in Mbeya. After investigating the police arrested Mwamboneke. He was tried in the Magistrates Court at Njombe by the District Commissioner on a charge of obtaining money

and goods under false pretences. He was not charged under the Laws of Witchcraft for it was extremely difficult to obtain a conviction under the Witchcraft Laws of Tanganyika.

Mwamboneke was, however, found guilty on the charge of obtaining money and goods under false pretences and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. He was later released on appeal as it was found from the statements of the witnesses that it was they who had held this belief in the powers of Mwamboneke over the leopards but that he himself had at no time purported to possess such powers, neither had he expressed any ability to expel the leopards on condition of receiving gifts. Such are the finer points of law.

After long and painstaking enquiries I learned about the origin of the ritual murders which were tied up in some way or other with the killings by leopards. It was to this area of Uwanje that many years ago, before the Europeans came to that part of Africa, an African came from a distant country. After obtaining permission from the chief he settled near the village of Matambo and was granted a section of land to cultivate and on which to build his hut. This African was a skilled agriculturist by comparison to the local people who until then had used a very primitive form of cultivation. By using better farming methods the stranger reaped bigger and better crops than the local people. After a few years the locals came to the conclusion that the reason why this immigrant obtained such good crops, far superior and more abundant to anything they themselves could produce, was because of some form of magic he possessed. They therefore decided to kill him and use parts of his body as an offering to their deity of fertility.

The conclusions the locals arrived at were that by these means alone could they harvest better crops. They did not consider there could be other reasons for increased yields. Fertility rites in some form or other are common, of course, to all tribes and races in Africa, and even today in the remoter areas of Europe mild forms of fertility rites are still carried out. In Uwanje ritual killings have steadily taken place since the murder of the immigrant pioneer. I had strong reason to believe that many ritual murders were blamed on the leopards.

The hunting of leopards is not an easy task, even under the most favourable conditions. I do not know of any animal approaching the size of a leopard that can take cover and hide itself so effectively, even

in places where there would not appear to be sufficient cover to hide a small domestic cat. They can be very elusive indeed, and when they know they are being hunted they will bring into play their great cunning. Following a wounded leopard can be a dangerous undertaking. This is not only because it is a determined attacker but because its great speed makes it difficult to stop, or even hit, with a rifle bullet when in full charge. The leopard is also dangerous because of his uncanny ability to hide in the most meagre cover which means that the charge when it comes will most likely start from close range. A wounded leopard is one of the most dangerous of all game animals in Africa. I consider that he is more dangerous to hunt than a wounded buffalo, and that is bad enough. If any hunter follows up a wounded leopard, he must realise that sooner or later the leopard will certainly charge, probably from short range. There will be an incredibly fast yellow streak of a fiendish, perfectly built killing machine coming at him with speed, determination and intent to kill.

During January 1948 two leopards turned man-eaters and the centre of their operations was the village of Kalingombe, situated in the Ubena country, Njombe District. This village is near the southern edge of the area in which the Ubena man-eating lions operated.

These leopards killed and ate twelve children and two adults, a man and a woman, before being accounted for. The man they killed was alone at the time, lying sick in an isolated hut. The leopards entered the hut, killed him and then dragged him outside and ate him. This took place in broad daylight. The village of Kalingombe was far from a motor track and the country in between was impassable by truck or Land-Rover and could only be reached by using porters. Owing to pressure of other departmental work I was unable to visit the area at the time, so I sent Game Scout Alfani to hunt the man-eaters.

He was armed with a ·404 cal. rifle and a ·303 cal. rifle. He had two trap guns with him as well. Alfani was a first-class hunter of considerable experience and had done stirling work while hunting the Njombe man-eating lions. He hunted the leopards for over a month using every method, trick and ruse he knew but he had no luck finding them.

I visited the area and took with me a further two trap guns. I had several strongly made circular bomas built as live bait traps, baited

them and set the trap guns hoping they would prove as successful as they had on the Uwanje Plateau which towered above the village of Kalingombe. I hunted hard for about two weeks, but without success, and then had to leave to attend to other matters in the Range. Alfani stayed on in the area.

As was usual on returning to my headquarters after spending several weeks in the bush, I became involved in a quantity of paper work. The amount of official paper work increased year by year, but in actual fact seventy-five per cent of the paper work was quite unnecessary and did more to prevent a Government official from doing his work properly than any other single factor. It was May before I was able to return to Kalingombe.

The leopards operated roughly within a radius of fifteen miles of the village. The people lived in small hamlets sometimes as much as five miles apart. The hamlets consisted of three or four huts and were, in fact, family groups. The leopards also hunted along the foothills of that side of the Uwanje mountains where there were large numbers of baboons, vervet monkeys and dik-dik antelopes. The country away from the foothills was reasonably flat and the bush partly dense thorn thicket. On the foothills of the mountain range the bush was denser with evergreen thicket in the ravines running down from the mountains. To hunt the leopards by spooring was impossible for the soil was so hard that only an occasional trace of spoor could be seen. In the softer soil on the bottoms and sides of the ravines spoor was seen occasionaly but this was of little value, except to give one a rough indication as to how recently the leopards had been in the area.

After discussing the situation with Alfani we decided to hunt separately and double our chances of coming across the leopards. Alfani preferred to hunt the plains, hunting northwards towards the upper Mbarali River. I hunted the foothills, ravines and mountain-side. We used the village of Kalingombe as our base. Four traps were in a constand state of readiness, the bait being live goats tethered inside the circular enclosure of strong poles which formed the trap. The trap guns were in position and fully cocked.

Alfani and I hunted our respective areas thoroughly. On the tenth day I hunted westward along the lower slopes of the Uwanje mountains. There were two local men with me and in the early afternoon we

came to a small stream which came out of a deep gorge in the mountain-side. Standing on the high bank of the stream I saw on the other side, some forty yards away, the two leopards lying sunning themselves on a large, flatish outcrop of rock. Neither had seen me, and the smaller of the two, a female, offered an easy shot but the big male offered a more difficult one. I took the easy shot and killed the female. The male came to its feet immediately, gave a hurried backward look towards us, then at the dead female, and sprang off the rock into the thicket on the far side from us.

I fired hurriedly and hit it. A second shot was put into the female, and after reloading the rifle I went to the rock and made sure she was dead. I went to the other side of the rocky outcrop and saw that the wounded leopard had gone into dense thicket, about ten acres in area, and which reached to immediately below the rock.

The two locals joined me on the outcrop and we peered down into the thicket but we could see nothing. We then threw stones into the thicket and listened carefully for any movement or sound after each stone fell. There was nothing. I sat down on the rock and, smoking my pipe, thought about the position. The set-up did not look good and I had no means of knowing how hard the leopard was hit.

It would have been impossible to get a sufficient number of local men to carry out a drive that day; it was most doubtful if there were enough males in the whole area for that purpose. In any event, taking into consideration the size and density of the thicket, I did not think a drive would have been successful. I decided to have a try myself and leave the local men behind on the rock. They would not have been much help in the thicket, in fact they would have added to the risks. In any case I do not think they would have agreed to enter the thicket.

After throwing a few more stones into the immediate vicinity of the thicket, I eased myself down the five or six foot steep face of the rock. The thicket was between six to ten feet in height and when standing visibility was limited to four or five feet, sometimes less. I crawled into the thicket along the spoor of the leopard. There was a light blood spoor and from the appearance of the blood the leopard had received only a flesh wound.

On my hands and knees I could see better ahead, although never more than fifteen feet and then only along the tunnels formed by bush

pig, dik-dik and Greater Kudu which were plentiful in the area. The tunnels were numerous and ran in all directions. The surface of the tracks were free of growth, fairly well worn but not hard-packed like an elephant path. I realised that, provided the leopard kept to the tunnels, there would be no great difficulty in following the spoor.

At the sides of the tunnel visibility was limited to a few feet for the most part and in that thick stuff, with the dappled light which so favours a leopard, it would have been difficult to see a leopard even a few feet away. Crawling on hands and knees is a great disadvantage for the hunter. The rifle impedes movement and care has to be taken to see that no dirt gets into the barrel at the muzzle. In the case of a hurried shot if one is off balance, and possibly with small branches of thicket in the way, to bring the rifle into action make the odds greatly in favour of the leopard. My rifle, of course, was fully cocked and with the safety-catch off.

After crawling a number of yards along the spoor I paused to listen and to size up the position. Whether it was a misguided sense of duty on my part, 'White man's burden' and all that rubbish, I don't know, but I decided to continue and have a go. Crawling carefully and slowly for about seventy yards, with frequent pauses to listen, I came to where the leopard had cut across its own spoor. It had travelled in a circle and it looked as if it had crossed shortly before I reached the spot. It had crossed from my left at almost right angles so I turned right on to the fresher spoor and moved even more cautiously than before. I expected to hear the snarl and coughing grunt of an angry leopard at any moment. This fresher spoor I was now on also travelled in a circle, veering to the right as the leopard changed direction by moving into fresh tunnels, until it eventually reached the first spoor I had followed. The leopard then went along the first spoor, and in a number of places its pug marks showed clearly imprinted where my hands and knees had left an impression on the ground. It could well have been following behind me when I turned on to the fresher spoor.

I was now in a bit of a dilemma and did not feel very happy about the position. Was the leopard in front or following just behind me? Who was the hunter and who was the hunted? I decided to continue and followed the spoor for the second time. After about forty yards the leopard had again turned off to the left. I crawled after him.

I had now been in the thicket for nearly an hour and a half, and although it was hot and airless in the tunnels it was not entirely the heat which made me sweat so profusely. My clothes were sodden. The sweat ran down my face, dripping off my nose and chin. It ran into my eyes, which was a nuisance for I was temporarily blinded for a few seconds at a time.

The leopard knew I was there hunting him. It was a man-eater and wounded; indeed it might well have been stalking me at that moment. I decided I had had enough for one day. I squatted there for about a quarter of an hour, listening intently, then I moved on along the spoor. I decided to follow the spoor as long as it continued going in one direction. After a further twenty yards or so it turned yet again to the left but I continued along a tunnel on a straight course. Still using the same degree of caution I reached the edge of the thicket eventually with a feeling of relief. I skirted the edges of the thicket until I reached the rocky outcrop to find that the two Africans had left, taking the skin of the dead leopard with them.

I was thirsty so I went down to the stream and doused my head in the cool water, had a good drink and then returned to the outcrop. There was no response to my calling and hullooing for the two Africans so I sat down to have a rest and a smoke which I needed badly, having been over two hours in the thicket. I sat on the rock watching the thicket hoping for some movement but realising there was little hope. Later, rested I headed back to camp some two hours away.

On reaching camp just after sunset I found that the two natives had returned and had given out the news I had been killed by the leopard, adding a few adornments to their story. I asked them why they had left the rock before I returned from the thicket. They said they had sat waiting after skinning the dead leopard and had then become afraid. As no shot or any other sound was heard from the thicket they concluded I had been killed by the man-eater. They were also afraid the leopard might suddenly appear and attack them.

It is possible the leopard died of its wound for no more people were killed in that area. On the other hand it may be that having lost its mate as well as being wounded the leopard decided to leave the area.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Elephant Poaching

Apart from a number I poached in the Lake Rukwa Valley during 1922, I killed few elephants in Tanganyika in subsequent years, except under licence. One reason for this was that I considered Tanganyika the best of all the territories in tropical Africa and I intended to make my home there should professional elephant hunting ever became uneconomic or no longer possible. For this reason I thought it advisable to have a clean record in the country!

The first of my two most successful elephant poaching ventures was into the Mweru Marsh in Northern Rhodesia. The boundary between that part of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo ran from the north end of Lake Mweru to a point near the southern end of Lake Tanganyika. My base camp was situated on the Congo side of the border, about half-way between the two lakes. The Mweru Marsh which lay south of the border, and was a Game Reserve, proved to be the finest elephant country I ever hunted. There were large numbers of elephant and much big ivory among them. The Marsh must have been comparable to the untouched elephant areas discovered by earlier elephant hunters during their wanderings, and described so well by Neumann and Bell in their books. It was an elephant hunter's paradise and had I been allowed unrestricted hunting I would have made a fortune within a couple of years.

The Mweru Marsh is a huge depression about a hundred miles long, from ten to twenty miles wide and running in a north-east to south-west direction. It had the appearance of a dried-up lake and may once have connected Lake Tanganyika with Lake Mweru. Large areas were swampy with a heavy growth of papyrus. Other areas were covered with high cane grass known as 'mteti' which grew fourteen or fifteen feet high. On the drier sloping ground around the sides of the depression was ordinary elephant grass, growing up to ten feet. There were no trees or bush in the Marsh but there was plenty of dense thicket and trees in the higher surrounding ground.

Looking through my field-glasses from the high ground overlooking the depression I could pick out several small groups of elephants with a few bulls also to be seen, singly and in twos and threes. The elephants in the papyrus and high mteti grasses could not be seen, for it was taller than they were, but their position was betrayed by the flocks of yellow-billed egrets which accompanied each group.

A small flock of these lovely white birds would suddenly appear flying over the top of the papyrus or mteti and would then disappear again into the high grasses. These birds fed on the grasshoppers and other insects which were flushed from their hiding places by the movements of the elephants. Sometimes an elephant would move to the spot where the egrets were feeding, causing them to rise in the air but they would settle again a minute or so later. Often the birds would settle on the elephants backs and rest there, particularly when the elephants were taking their mid-day siesta. During these siestas the backs of the elephants were splashed liberally with white, giving them a harlequin-like appearance.

To make my hunting more effective in that sea of high grasses, I had a ladder made from the stems of the leaf-like fronds of a certain kind of palm tree. The palm fronds had a fibrous cane-like structure, were extremely strong and very light. The ladder was seven or eight foot long and about a foot wide between the uprights. I had used ladders of this kind before, and because of their lightness I found that an African could manoeuvre one through tunnels in the high grass without much difficulty. This style of ladder was better than a heavy, surveyor-type tripod with a small platform on the top. I soon gave up using a tripod for it was clumsy and took time to set up. It was not always easy to set

the legs so that the platform on top was reasonably level, and this drawback was particularly bad on soft, boggy ground or in swamp. It often happened that when mounting to the platform by means of a step fixed to one of the legs, that particular leg would sink into the soft ground making it impossible to stand on the platform at all. A ladder could be quickly placed upright on any kind of ground and when held by two men it was possible to take a quick look over the top of the grass.

The nearer one got to the hidden or partly hidden elephants the more frequent the looks became. I shot a number of elephants in the Mweru Marsh from the top of a ladder, using a light calibre rifle. The grasses over a large part of the Marsh were taller than the elephants so that it was not possible to see them even from the top of the ladder, no matter how near one approached them. By taking an occasional look at the egrets I was able to make an accurate approach. Once the elephants were heard moving in the high papyrus or mteti no further look-outs were made from the ladder. I would then close with the elephants and the shooting was done from the ground.

Hunting in this sort of country was arduous and sometimes dangerous. Visibility was very poor; even at a range as low as five yards it was not always possible to get a shot owing to the thick grass stalks covering the elephant's vital parts. There were a few small areas where the elephants had trampled and broken down the high grass sufficiently to make visibility better. In such patches shots could be taken at twenty yards. For the most part it was close range shooting.

There were times when one was too near an elephant to be at ease but when hunting in thick stuff, and having got the elephant in sight, I prefered to keep him in sight no matter how short the range, for one then knew exactly what he was doing.

There was one occasion in the Marsh when an elephant knocked my hat off with a swish of its tail. I was following close behind in a tunnel in the papyrus when it turned off at right angles into another tunnel. I hurried the few yards to the entrance to this tunnel and found that the elephant had stopped a few feet from the entrance. This left me a bare five or six feet from its stern. As I stood there the elephant gave a swish of its tail, but from the corner of my eye I got a glimpse of the start of the movement and reacted just in time by ducking. My hat was

knocked flying. A big elephant's tail is anything from six to eight feet long from the base to the tip of the wire-like bristles on the end. At the base it is as thick as a man's calf, tapering to the size of a man's wrist. This particular swish was made with such strength and speed that had it hit me at the side of the head it could have knocked me out, or badly lacerated my face with the wire-like bristles at the end.

My base camp was sited at a well hidden spot in the Belgian Congo about five miles from the border. It was near the old slave route running from Pweto on Lake Mweru to Moliro on Lake Tanganyika. This route was still well defined in places and had been used by the notorious Arab slaver, Tibbu Tib. This was the first section of the long journey along which the slave gangs had struggled laden with ivory on their way to Moliro, Lake Tanganyika, Ujiji, Tabora, Bagamoyo and the short sea crossing to the slave markets at Zanzibar.

On the Rhodesian side of the border my nearest neighbours were two petty chiefs, Tambala and Sirimani. Tambala, a large fat elderly man, had been a soldier of Tibbu Tib and was wounded at the battle for the slavers fort at Pweto, when a British military column coming from the south attacked and destroyed the fort. The battle was decisive and completely broke Tibbu Tib's power in that area.

Sirimani claimed to be a son of Tibbu Tib by an African mother. Whether this was true or not I could not say, but from his appearance he certainly had a large proportion of Arab blood in his veins. These two men became my two chief intelligence officers and they built up a network of informers that covered the whole of that section of Northern Rhodesia. It was largely due to the efficiency of the organisation that I had so little difficulty avoiding the patrols sent out by the administrative authorities at Mporocoso and Chienji to apprehend me. They had heard of my activities and took action to put an end to them.

I had no difficulty in disposing of my ivory. Moliro was a small one-man station run by a Belgian Administrative Officer and there was a small trading store owned by an Arab and an Indian in partnership. The price of ivory at that time was twenty shillings a pound and the traders agreed to take all the ivory I could produce for fifteen shillings a pound. Twenty-five per cent was not too high a price to pay for the disposal of poached ivory, particularly as it also covered the

consideration paid to the Administrative Officer to turn a blind eye to my activities.

I had about twenty permanent porters and they were a fine team of men. Travelling light, some fifteen of them would accompany me into the Marsh and the rest would stay behind at the camp. The section of the Marsh I hunted depended on information received from my intelligence service. We would remain in some part of the Marsh until we had a full load of ivory, or until we received information telling us it was advisable to leave the area. On a few occasions we received information urging us to move away quickly when we had dead elephants on our hands. We knew that unless we cleared out the vultures circling overhead would most certainly betray our position to a police patrol in the vicinity.

Two of my men became expert at chopping out tusks in a very short time. They did not chip away at the hard bone in the skull which is in close contact with the hollow part of the tusk. Adjoining the hard bone is the honeycomb-type bone structure of the rest of the skull and it is much easier and quicker to chop through that kind of bone. My experts would chop through the honeycomb bone in very short time and remove the tusks with the hard bone and some of the honeycomb type still attached. This they carefully removed from the tusk when time and place permitted. On one occasion after killing a big bull we were so hurried we had to chop off the ivory at the lip leaving the hollow section intact inside the skull.

I hunted the Mweru Marsh successfully for just over six months. It was then that the Rhodesian authorities, having failed in their efforts to apprehend me, made representations to the Belgian Administrative Officer at Moliro about my activities. The Administrative Officer sent me a letter by runner and suggested I come into Moliro to discuss the position with him. This I did, and he advised me to stop my poaching operations and leave the area for if the complaints went to higher authorities he would have no option but to hand me over to the Rhodesian authorities. I followed this advice and left the area; it would have been foolish not to have left. My men, the informers, the Belgian official and the Arab trader were all sorry when I had to stop. I was sorry, too, it had been the most lucrative part of my career as an elephant hunter. In fact, shortly after I started hunting in the Marsh I

killed eighteen elephants in one day. All except two were bulls and in thirty years of elephant hunting I never again killed so many in one day. This includes the years I spent on elephant control in Tanganyika when on a number of occasions I reached double figures in one day.

I sailed from Moliro in a small Belgian lake steamer, the *Vengeur* and arrived in Albertville four days later. It was a pleasant, leisurely voyage calling at small trading stations on the way to pick up produce of various kinds and off-load trade goods. As there were no navigation lights on Lake Tanganyika, and because of occasional violent storms on the lake, coasting steamers spent the night anchored off some trading station. At Albertville I met two English elephant hunters, Bird and Woollard, and it was pleasant to speak and hear English again after such a long period of speaking nothing but native language.

We stayed at the Hotel du Lac run by a pleasant but shrewd Greek named Spiro. He made us very welcome, probably because we spent freely, as did all elephant hunters when they came to town. Woollard was hunting a large area of country on both sides of the railway line running from Albertville to Kabalo on the Lualaba River. He was having reasonable success and suggested I try the area lying to the north-east. Woollard told me also that if I let Spiro handle my ivory for a consideration I need have no worries about the Belgian authorities as Spiro would fix those matters. In any case the Belgians never did any safaris in the bush and would not know or care where I was. Spiro confirmed this information saying that it was all simple and straightforward, that I would have nothing to worry about so far as Government officials were concerned.

The Northern Rhodesian tracker I had brought with me soon collected a team of carriers who were mostly men from Rhodesia. I bought supplies to last two or three months, and six days later we left Albertville heading in a north-westerly direction. The country was sparsely populated and the villages few and far between. There was another small tribe living in that country known as the Bamboti. These people, like the Wanderobo of East Africa, did not cultivate land except the odd small patches of tobacco which they never tended after planting. They lived entirely on wild fruits, roots, honey, game, and guinea fowl which they caught in large numbers by means of cunningly-made snares. Like all other tribes in Africa who live in this

manner, they never killed wastefully or wantonly but only for present need. They did not build villages but family groups built a few rough grass shelters and these were their home for two or three months. Like all other bush tribes, including the pygmy, they were friendly and helpful when they got to know you.

The Bamboti were a happy, contented people who had no wish for any other way of life. It is to be hoped that no other way will be forced on them by misguided do-gooders who may happen to be in authority. This is just the sort of thing that could happen to them because they have no interest in money, in cloth or any other products of civilisation. I came across these people in the bush occasionally and they gave me much information on the movements of elephants. In exchange they were allowed to take all the meat they wanted from any elephant I killed, plus small gifts of salt and tobacco which they greatly appreciated.

There were numerous small streams throughout that part of the country and during a certain time of year they carried vast numbers of tiny whitebait type fish. The Bamboti caught quantities of these fish and after being dried in the sun they were delicious to eat. Apart from elephant there was little game in the area other than buffalo and these were plentiful. The buffalo was the Bamboti's main source of meat supply and they hunted them using a short longbow and poisoned arrows. As bowmen they were very skilful and because of this skill, plus the potent arrow poison, few buffalo got away wounded. With the larger game animals it is almost always the poison which kills them rather than accurate shooting.

Death from arrow poison may cause an animal considerable suffering but I do not think it is known whether this is so or not. In any case the bow and poisoned arrow, provided the poison is reasonably fresh, is a more humane weapon than the muzzle loader which is used universally by Africans. With the muzzle loader a large percentage of animals shot escape wounded, to die a lingering death or exist in pain with a suppurating wound in some part of its body. No matter on what part of its body a soft skin game animal receives a wound from a poisoned arrow, provided the arrowhead fully enters the flesh and the poison is fresh, death takes place within fifteen minutes and often in less.

On getting to an animal that had been killed by a poisoned arrow

the hunters cut out the arrow and a small amount of flesh surrounding it. No other precautions were taken and no one appeared to suffer any ill effects from eating the rest of the meat. One method by which these hunters tested the potency of the poison was to nick the skin of the upper inner part of the forearm with a knife. They allowed the trickle of blood to flow down the forearm until it reached the wrist where they then touched the trickle with a poisoned arrowhead. The hunter then watched the blood coagulate and the speed with which coagulation ran up the trickle of blood. From these observations he judged the potency of the poison but always rubbed his hand across the trickle of blood to wipe it away before the coagulation reached the nick in his forearm.

I hunted buffalo several times with these men and some of them were very fine hunters indeed, masters of their craft. If the spoor of the buffalo was several hours old they followed it for a short while, judging the speed and direction of the herd. Having weighed up the position, and if the circumstances were favourable, they left the spoor and took a direct route to the area they considered the buffalo were heading. When they neared this area, known to be favoured by buffalo, the hunters angled back towards the line they expected the animals to take and cut the spoor. The hunters were invariably correct in their calculations and saved a lot of time in getting up to their quarry.

This method requires an intimate knowledge of the whole country and of the habits of the animals being hunted. When following the spoor of an animal three or four of the hunters worked together, moving abreast and about three or four yards apart. One or the other would catch a quick glimpse of spoor and give a signal, upon which they all made a slight change of course if necessary. By hunting in this manner they travelled much faster than if they had used the more tedious method of following the spoor step by step.

I did some hunting to test out each of the areas and made many enquiries of the Bamboti as to where the best elephant country was to be found. Eventually we reached the Kaamba Hills and there I built a base camp some ten miles from Kisengo Village. It was a pleasant, well watered country and apart from a few groups of Bamboti there were no inhabitants at all. Elephants were not in large numbers in the region but the ones that were were practically all bulls. During the

whole time I was there I did not come across, or see signs of more than three or four elephant herds. The bulls moved about in twos or threes or singly, and most of them carried big ivory. Although the area had never been hunted much the bulls had all the cunning of their kind. I suppose that is the reason they had lived so long to grow big ivory.

Hunting elephants under such conditions demands great skill, intimate knowledge of the ways of the quarry and much endurance on the part of the hunter if he is to be successful. Looking back, the months I spent hunting elephants in this area was the most satisfying period in my hunting career, although financially I had done better in other areas over a similar period. It was on the grass-covered slopes of the twin Kaamba Hills that I killed my biggest tusker. He was a huge bull with one tusk and that weighed one hundred and sixty-five pounds. The other tusk had broken off short at the lip but the short stump was quite healthy for the nerve of the tusk had not been damaged or exposed.

In the same area I lost an even bigger tusker. I know it is always the biggest that gets away but that one had the biggest ivory I have ever seen in my life. His tusks were truly massive and, although the forest in which we were when he charges from short range was fairly dense, I had a good view of them as he weaved his way through a patch of rubber vines. The tusks were long and massive down to the tips and to me they appeared to be as thick as my waist. I think they must have weighed well in the region of two hundred pounds each. I had a further opportunity of judging the size after killing his companion less than half an hour later. The second bull's ivory went one hundred and twenty and one hundred and twenty-five pounds each tusk, and although they were a fine trophy they appeared small and insignificant compared with those of the bull I had lost.

Some three weeks after losing the big bull I was very nearly killed by an elephant. It was in a bad swamp and I was using a double-barrelled ·450 cal. rifle. On receiving the first barrel, which later proved to be a perfect heart shot, the bull charged back along his tracks. I was standing waist deep in swamp, some three feet to the side of his tracks, and my second barrel failed to stop or turn him. Whether the failure of my second shot was due to the intervening bush, bad light or insecure footing in the swamp I am not sure. When he was nearly on me I threw

myself sideways, away from the tracks, but he scooped me up in his trunk in passing and held me up in the air. He carried me like this for a short distance then flicked me backwards. I fell on his hindquarters and rolled off into the swamp. The elephant continued on its way for another thirty or forty yards and then fell dead.

Due to a couple of cracked ribs, severe bruises and lacerations received while being handled by the elephant I was laid up in camp for nearly a month. This long convalescence was irksome for several reasons. It is a maxim that should an elephant hunter have a narrow escape from death by an elephant he must successfully hunt down another one as soon as possible. An elephant hunter when working at his trade tends to think most about his last elephant and it is not good for his nerves or peace of mind that the last elephant was the one that nearly killed him.

The first elephant I shot after convalescing behaved in an almost identical manner to the one that nearly killed me. He was a good sized bull and I got up to him in thick evergreen forest. His tusks, which were about fifty pounds each, grew in a peculiar manner and the tips were only some six inches apart. The elephant was standing facing me and I took the heart shot since because of the dense foliage, the brain shot was too chancey. The range was about fifteen yards, and on receiving the shot in the heart he moved off at full speed in the direction he was facing. Crashing in my direction he passed about twelve feet to my right. As the higher foliage still partly obscured his head I withheld firing the second barrel. He circled behind and around me and fell dead about fifteen yards to my left, having almost completed a semicircle. Had I been in need of it the experience would have certainly provided a nerve restorative.

Although profitable, the hunting I did in the Kaamba Hills area was not true poaching because the arrangements Spiro had made with the Belgian officials in Albertville removed all legal risks that go with elephant poaching. After recovering from my injuries I hunted for another month, by which time it became obvious that further hunting in the region would provide a livelihood but little more. It was not only the toll I had taken but most of the other elephants had moved away to a safer region.

The last area where I carried out elephant poaching on a large scale

was in another part of the Belgian Congo. It was across the border from the south-east corner of the Ubangui-Chari-Chad in French Equatorial Africa. The boundaries of the Ubangui-Chari-Chad, the Belgian Congo and the Anglo-Egyptian-Sudan (as it was then known) all met in that area. My base camp was in the Ubangui-Chari-Chad, some twenty-five miles north of the Mbomu River. The Mbomu River was the territorial boundary and along its southern side in the Belgian Congo an area of land, some two hundred and fifty miles long by thirty miles deep, had been cleared of all natives by the Belgians. This was done as a preventative measure against sleeping sickness.

In the French administered territory north of the Mbomu River a hunter was allowed an unlimited number of elephants on a licence. I held one of those licences but the huge tract of uninhabited country on the Belgian side was too great an attraction for me to resist. It was excellent elephant country, unhunted and the incidence of sleeping sickness could not have been higher there than on the French side of the border.

Remembering an experiment carried out by Dr. W. H. Dye in south-east Tanganyika during 1924, it seemed to me that the risk of contracting sleeping sickness in the uninhabited country on the Congo side of the border was less than on the French side, which was lightly populated. In one village in south-east Tanganyika where the sleeping sickness infection was heavy, Dr. Dye arranged for all the inhabitants to be removed into a fly-free area. After a time the uninfected men were allowed to go back to their village for two and a half months to harvest their crops. In the meantime the fly position had become worse in the vicinity of the village, but not one of the men contracted sleeping sickness.

They were allowed to stay on in the area and after twenty months Dr. Dye could still find no trace of the disease. The epidemic was stopped merely by the removal of infected humans, although the fly remained as bad as ever. The results of Dr. Dye's experiment convinced me that the spread of sleeping sickness was caused by a man-fly-man contact and not by a game-fly-man contact as stated by some workers in this disease.

Within a month of the onset of the rains it was not possible to ford the Mbomu River. As it was quite wide it was impossible to make a

bridge by slinging vines from the top of a large tree to the top of another across the river. Rafts could have been made for the river was slow flowing and they would have been suitable for ferrying my men and loads across. The drawback to rafts was that it took time to make them in case of emergency had the Belgians sent armed patrols into the area for instance. Any contact with a patrol of that description would have made it necessary to get back across the border as fast as possible. In fact, my men had standing orders to the effect that should we encounter a patrol, and the position looked serious, they were to scatter and make their own way back across the border. They were also told to jettison their loads if necessary, whether it be a tusk or one of my personal loads rather than risk capture. This was the reason I could only make my poaching trips during the dry season when the river was readily forded.

I poached the area fairly thoroughly over three consecutive dry seasons. In the wet season I hunted legally on the French side of the border and the total results were very good. During that time I encountered only one person on the Congo side of the border, an African, and we came on him as he was digging for wild yams. The man was unaware of our approach and we captured him. He was stark naked and although he appeared to be living the life of a completely wild man he was quite sane. I gave him the name of Kinanda after he had agreed to join my safari and work for me. Kinanda turned out to be the best and most courageous tracker I ever had, and the most faithful of all the many Africans I ever employed.

The language most commonly spoken in that area was Sanga. This was a language of the rivers and was used over a large portion of that part of Africa. When we captured Kinanda he could not speak a word of Sanga but after a day or two I found that he could speak Ngala which is the lingua franca around Stanleyville, some four hundred miles south in the Belgian Congo. Although Kinanda was with me for about three years I never learned anything about his life before he joined me, and the tribal markings on his face were those of a tribe I had never encountered.

My men enjoyed the extra excitement of poaching trips as much as I did. Their slight feeling of tension on crossing the Mbomu River could be sensed and they spoke in subdued tones. Our mode of crossing never

varied: Kinanda went across first and I stood on the bank with rifle ready in case a crocodile appeared. The porters then crossed in single file and after they were all safely over I followed. I never taught Kinanda to shoot but he would stand on the bank of the river while I crossed, the spare rifle gripped firmly in his hands, and a very fierce look on his face as if defying any crocodile to come anywhere near me.

Shortly after joining me Kinanda acted a simple piece of drollery each time we crossed the Mbomu River to the Belgian side. On reaching the Congo bank of the river, and before the men started to cross, Kinanda would shout in the Ngala language insults and abuse at us. He would shake my spare rifle and shout what he and his men would do to us if we dared to cross into the Congo. We hurled insults and abuse back at him in the Sanga language, telling what we would do to him and his men should they dare to cross to our side. This simple and somewhat boyish buffoonery was re-enacted every time we crossed over. It never failed to raise loud peals of laughter from all of us and put us in a good humour for the coming poaching trip.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The African Ivory Poacher in Tanganyika

When the muzzle loading trade guns came to tropical Africa the hunters of several tribes took up elephant hunting as a profession. The most successful in East Africa came from certain clans of the Makua, Magindo and Angoni tribes, whose countries lie in the southern part of Tanganyika. These professional elephant hunters were true soldiers of fortune and were known as Walumba in Tanganyika. They sometimes travelled far before settling under some chief, and their descendants may still be found great distances from their fathers' original homes. These Walumba enjoyed considerable prestige among the people of the area where they settled and often married women of the local tribe.

The game laws were much stricter at that time than they are today. They were rigorously enforced and it was more than a man's life was worth to hunt elephants without the chief's permission. It was usual throughout Africa for the chief to take one tusk of any elephant killed by a hunter. The chief's tusk, known in Tanganyika as the Lukombilo, was the shorter one because this was the tusk the elephant used to dig into the ground of the chief and was therefore his by right. The hunter took the longer tusk. If the elephant killed was a one-tusker then the chief took the tusk but compensated the hunter with a gift of cloth.

When the Europeans took over control of Africa each territory

formulated its own game laws, and these laws were administered by the central governments. In some countries game departments were formed but none of the departments was strong enough to adequately enforce the game laws. The native chiefs and sub-chiefs no longer obtained any benefits from game in their areas so therefore took no interest in game conservation. This enabled the bush African to poach to his heart's content, and the enforcement of game laws by the central governments was never very effective.

Most of the offences committed under the game laws were the poaching of game animals and illicit dealing in ivory and rhinoceros horn. The ivory poacher and the illicit dealer in ivory and rhino horn in Tanganyika were greatly helped in disposing of their illicit goods by the fact that Zanzibar is a free ivory and rhino horn market. It is also the biggest ivory market in the world. No questions were asked when anyone arrived with a consignment of ivory, for the Zanzibar authorities were concerned only with the export duty levied on ivory and horn when it left the country.

There are numerous small dhow ports and fishing villages along the coast of Tanganyika, and those most favoured by the ivory runners were Mkwaja, Sadani, Winde, Mbweni and even Kunduchi which was a small fishing village about twenty miles north of Dar-es-Salaam before it became a residential area. With the exception of Sadani there were no Coast Guards or Customs officials stationed at any of the ports, nor did any Customs vessel patrol the coastline. Prior to the last war there was only one African Coast Guard whose duty was to patrol the coast on a bicycle between Dar-es-Salaam, northwards to the Tanga Provincial boundary—a distance of nearly one hundred miles. With a favourable wind a small dhow could cross from any of those ports to Zanzibar in four or five hours. The illicit ivory trade was tied up with smuggling as the dhows which took out shipments of ivory also brought in matches, cigarettes, sugar, liquor and trade goods, on all of which there was a heavy duty.

Small buyers based on those ports made foot safaris into the main elephant areas in the interior and, travelling from village to village, bought the odd pair of tusks here and there. These tusks were from elephants that local hunters had succeeded in killing with their muzzle loaders, or perhaps from an elephant that had got away wounded from

a Game Scout working on crop protection but had later died. The majority of such tusks were removed from the dead elephants and hidden until an itinerant, illicit ivory buyer came along.

All the tusks bought by the dealer were cut into three parts, the hollow end which is the least valuable part of the tusk, the centre part which is the most valuable, and the tip. Very large tusks were cut into four parts. In this way the pieces can be hidden in head loads without the curve of tusks betraying the contents of the loads. Cutting the tusks in this manner does not detract from the value of the ivory. All tusks are cut into three sections by established ivory merchants and each section meets the particular requirements of the different markets in the world. Ivory is readily cut with a fine-toothed wood saw if a little water is used to keep the teeth clear of ivory dust which, without water, will clog the saw.

Having covered an area and bought what tusks he could, the buyer and his porters headed back to his favourite dhow port or fishing village, following little-used footpaths as much as possible. If they met anyone en route who was inquisitive and wanted to know what the safari was and for where it was bound, they gave some plausible reason, often saying they were off to the coast to take on six months contracts as labourers at some sisal estate.

Those illicit ivory buyers, and the poachers, were an extremely tough bunch of men. A Game Scout patrolling alone with his one porter seldom attempted to interfere with a well-armed ivory buyer and his party, or with a party of heavily armed elephant poachers. During June 1939 Game Scout Mohammed Asiki and his porter were on patrol between Manerŏmango and the Selous Game Reserve in the Dar-es-Salaam District when they encountered a party of poachers in the bush. The armed party was laden with dried game meat and two or three suspicious looking bundles.

Mohammed halted the party, demanded their names, the name of their village and headman and said that he wanted to see what was in the bundles. A fight ensued during which Mohammed was twice stabbed in the stomach and he died later from the wounds. The porter was badly beaten up and the gang decamped taking with them Mohammed's ·303 cal. and ·404 cal. rifles, also his hat badge, a brass buffalo head.

It was several days before the news of this affair reached me in the bush in the Bugamoyo District. On receiving the news I left immediately for the Maneromango area and during investigations took a very tough line indeed. I had no intention of allowing poachers to get away with the murder of one of my men. This line of action showed results and I was able to arrest four of the culprits. I recovered the two stolen rifles and the hat badge. The poachers were tried in the High Court, Dar-es-Salaam where the charge of murder was changed to that of manslaughter. They were found guilty and received sentences ranging from four to seven years each.

In the Rufiji District during February 1944 another Game Scout, Salim Mohamed, was shot and killed while attempting to arrest an Arab poacher who had killed a waterbuck. The poacher, who had no game licence, was using a 9·3 cal. Mauser rifle with soft nosed bullets and he shattered Salim Mohamed's shoulder with his first shot. He then made off leaving the injured man lying there; he died several hours later from his injuries. The poacher was arrested and tried in a magistrates court where he was fined fifty shillings for killing game without a licence, and committed to the High Court on a charge of murder. According to the evidence the Game Scout had fired a warning shot in the air as the poacher was running away. The poacher stated that he thought the Game Scout was firing at him and he turned and shot in self defence.

The outcome of the case was that the poacher was aquitted of the charge of murder. This caused considerable concern and dismay to the Game Scouts in my Range and also to myself. The scouts could not understand such a form of justice at all. They complained bitterly to me saying, 'when a poacher kills a waterbuck he is fined fifty shillings, but when he follows this up and kills a Game Scout he is aquitted. Does this mean that in the eyes of justice a waterbuck is of more value than a Game Scout?' Whatever explanation I gave had little effect on their outraged feelings. It did harden their attitude towards the poaching fraternity, however, and they took an even tougher line with them than before.

Game Scouts were frequently fired at in the bush by gangs of poachers and on two occasions they fired at me. The poachers in the Dar-es-Salaam, Rufiji and Morogoro districts were an exceedingly bad

lot and tough in every sense of the word. Game Scouts operating singly and accompanied by only one porter had to move warily through bush where they knew poachers were operating. Frequently a Game Scout had to adopt the attitude that discretion was the better part of valour. On such occasions he would get back to a village as fast as he could and send the information to the head scout of the district. If the head scout received the information in time he collected all the Game Scouts he could and went to the area.

The two most successful elephant poachers in the eastern part of Tanganyika were both Africans. I never knew or heard of any other poachers in the territory who approached them either in skill or success. One was Saidi Chamwenyewe who lived in the Rufiji District and the other was Huseini Asmani who lived in the Morogoro District. In spite of a lot of effort on my part I was unable to get them on any serious offence. I did obtain two or three convictions against both of them under the Game Ordinance but they were for minor offences.

Both were well armed, Saidi prefering magazine rifles and Huseini double-barrelled rifles. Saidi not only hunted elephants but operated as well as an illicit ivory buyer and made extended safaris into the Southern Province to buy ivory. The nearest Saidi came to being arrested on a serious charge was when two Game Scouts on patrol on the Upper Rufiji River received news that he was coming through from the Liwale District with a safari loaded with ivory. There were two footpaths along which Saidi could travel so the scouts decided to each cover a footpath. The news proved true and Saidi with sixteen porters, was seen approaching by one of the scouts who was hiding. As there was no sign of firearms among the men in the safari the scout felt confident and stepped out from his hiding place to halt the safari.

Saidi walked up to the scout and asked him what he wanted. After some discussion Saidi produced a revolver from under his shirt and pointed it at the scout's stomach. The scout, as ordered, dropped his rifle. It was picked up by one of Saidi's men, the bolt removed and thrown into the bush and the rifle thrown in another direction.

Saidi then told the scout, 'You leave me entirely alone in future. Should you ever make another attempt to arrest me the hyenaes and vultures will clean up your bones in the bush.'

It took the scout the rest of the day to find the bolt of his rifle. He had

no intention of following up Saidi's safari, and was glad to have been let off.

Huseini Asmani did little illicit ivory buying. He concentrated on elephant poaching and at this he was most successful. During 1943 Huseini was picked up by an elephant he had wounded and severely injured. At the time I thought this would be the end of his elephant poaching activities, but it was not so. Six months later after he had fully recovered from his injuries he was as active as ever.

Had the opportunity occurred I would have done my utmost to have obtained convictions against Saidi and Huseini. I would have asked for the maximum penalty, which was severe. At the same time, having done a considerable amount of elephant poaching myself in earlier days, I had a sneaking regard and respect for both Saidi and Huseini.

The sympathies of the bush-living African are all on the side of the elephant poacher. They cannot understand how a Government can claim ownership over a wild animal that wanders through the bush at will and over which no man has control. If elephant poaching is carried out by an individual to any great extent the news travels from village to village in that area, particularly if the culprit is a non-African. That applied to a European most of all and it was not long before an active Game Ranger apprehended any European poaching elephants. As Game Ranger, it took me only three or four weeks after taking over the Eastern Province Range, to break up and arrest some members of a European gang of elephant poachers. The gang had operated successfully for about two years in the Rufiji District. A number of lesser African poachers I also arrested in that Range, but Saidi and Huseini defeated me. They were masters of their trade.

By far the greater part of all ivory handled by illicit ivory traders was from found ivory and from the odd elephant shot by the local hunters of an isolated village. Local hunters usually went in pairs and kept to their own locality. They used muzzle loading Tower muskets, which were heavily overloaded with home-made gunpowder with a heavy, roughly rounded slug of iron for a bullet. Approaching their quarry as closely as possible, they would fire simultaneously, then under cover of a cloud of black powder smoke they turned and ran away from the elephant as fast as they could. On reaching a safe distance they

stopped to hold an animated discussion on the actual shooting and what the possible results would be. They then reloaded their muskets and returned to where they had fired at the elephant.

If the elephant had gone away they followed the spoor, but seldom for longer than three or four hours if the animal was travelling at a good pace with little blood on the spoor. If the spoor showed that the elephant was badly wounded or crippled and unable to travel at any speed the hunters followed eagerly until they caught up. They then closed, delivered another fusilade and bolted again as fast as they could. This procedure went on sometimes for four or five fusilades, and sometimes continued on the following day until the elephant died.

When the hunters lived in a small, isolated hamlet of only a few huts everyone would be related to each other in some way and could be trusted. The others were told of the death of the elephant, and leaving one or two aged ones in the village the rest went to the carcase. They took knives, axes, cooking pots and a supply of meal. Each family group built its own drying racks and as much meat as possible was cut into strips for drying over a slow fire. The tusks were not chopped out but left in situ for six or seven days, by which time the tissue had putrified and the tusks were withdrawn with little effort. The hunters then hid the tusks in some safe place in the bush where they were left until an itinerant ivory buyer turned up.

In the unlikely event that a Game Scout was patrolling in the area he would be attracted to the spot by the tell-tale vultures. These birds circle high overhead and disclose the position of a dead animal. In the case of a large animal, such as an elephant, the vultures circle in great numbers for several days. But the Game Scout would certainly be told that the elephant was found dead, that they were taking the meat, and why not? How could they possibly know what caused the elephant's death? They had been about to cut out and take it to District Headquarters to claim the small reward paid for found ivory.

It is difficult to say with any degree of accuracy what is the percentage of elephants killed against those that get away wounded when hunted with muzzle loading muskets. From information I received from various sources I would say that for every elephant killed with these weapons six to eight get away wounded. This means there are a great many elephants wandering about tropical Africa with at least one

muzzle loader slug in their bodies. I once came across the remains of an elephant fairly recently killed by a poacher using a muzzle loader and it had been killed by a perfectly placed brain shot. The iron slug was still in the brain cavity, but it is the only case I ever heard of where an elephant was killed by a brain shot fired by a muzzle loader.

Among other risks the muzzle loader hunter takes is the one of his gun bursting. This is not an uncommon occurrence and sometimes causes the death of the shooter. More often it results in a mutilated and burned left hand and forearm and facial injuries. Considering the size of the charge put into these muskets it is surprising there are not more cases of bursting. The usual charge is three fingers in depth in the musket barrel of black powder for use on ordinary game, four fingers for buffalo and larger game animals, and five fingers for elephant. Those are the standard charges although some hunters use bigger ones. The charge is well rammed down with a wad of rag or sisal tow on top of the powder. On the charge are one or two roughly rounded iron slugs of about five-eighths of an inch in diameter. The slugs are usually made from old bolts.

The nipple on which the percussion cap is fitted is primed with a fine-grain black powder. Manufactured percussion caps are not readily obtained by the hunters so they make their own in a most ingenious manner. A piece of very thin tin is made into the shape and size of an ordinary percussion cap. Inside and and at the bottom of this a disc, cut from the striking surface of a safety match box, is fitted. When the cap is pressed on the nipple the striking surface of the matchbox paper makes firm contact with the priming powder. When it is struck with the musket's heavy hammer it functions as satisfactorily as a manufactured percussion cap. Two or three such caps are usually attached to the stock of the musket as spares.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Elephant Control and Crop Protection in Tanganyika

A cultivated crop has an attraction for some varieties of game animals, particularly as it is often the only succulent food available when the rest of the country is dried up. Elephants are the most spectacular offenders. In a single visit they can do a great deal of damage to a banana grove, a paddy field, a patch of millet or maize or a plantation of sugar cane. Even when the crops are harvested and placed in the small hut-like granaries, elephants enter a village at night, break down the granaries and consume a year's grain supply. It is not only what the raiders consume, which is considerable, but the amount they destroy by trampling and tearing down.

If measures are taken against raiding elephants they seem to lose all fear of man and raid cultivated crops with impunity, even in broad daylight. In the worst cases cultivated areas have the appearance of having been struck by a typhoon and sometimes cause local famines. The raiding is invariably done by herds, seldom by big single bulls.

After much trial and error the Tanganyika Game Department evolved a system of elephant control and crop protection which has proved very effective. Uganda was the only other territory in Africa that found it necessary to apply an organised form of control similar to that used in Tanganyika.

Uganda had a team of highly skilled elephant hunters in 'Samaki'

Salmon, Pete Pearson, and Deaf Banks, but it was found necessary to kill only about half the number of elephants per year in Uganda as had to be killed in Tanganyika. Kenya never had any serious elephant problems compared with Tanganyika and Uganda, and any control measures taken in that country were sporadic and unorganised.

The beginning of elephant control in Tanganyika was started in 1922. The first scheme was evolved by the late Mr. C. F. M. Swynnerton, first Game Warden of Tanganyika under British rule. Under this scheme it was decided to attempt to clear a part of the Mahenge District of elephants and Mr. C. Goss, a Game Ranger, was given the task of carrying it out. Goss was a first-class elephant hunter, and together with a number of hand picked African Game Scouts he started shooting operations to clear the given area of all elephants. Some one hundred and fifty elephants were killed over a fairly short period and I later discussed this operation with both Swynnerton and Goss. They were emphatic that the scheme was a complete failure, a waste of elephants. It had achieved nothing and the plan would not be tried again.

In 1923 another scheme was introduced. This was in the form of a Governor's Licence, issued to selected hunters to kill up to twenty-five raiding elephants. The following extracts from a letter I received from the Administrative Officer, Tukuyu District, dated 16th November 1923, offering me one of these licences, shows the terms under which they were issued.

Terms

(*a*) In the case of each elephant shot, one tusk to be retained by the hunter, the other to be handed over to Government.

(*b*) No expense of any kind to be incurred by Government whether for the payment or outfit of the 'safari' or in travelling warrants.

(*c*) No compensation to be payable by Government in respect of any injury sustained.

(*d*) In short, the hunter is given a Governor's Licence to shoot the number of elephants recommended by me, on a profit sharing basis.

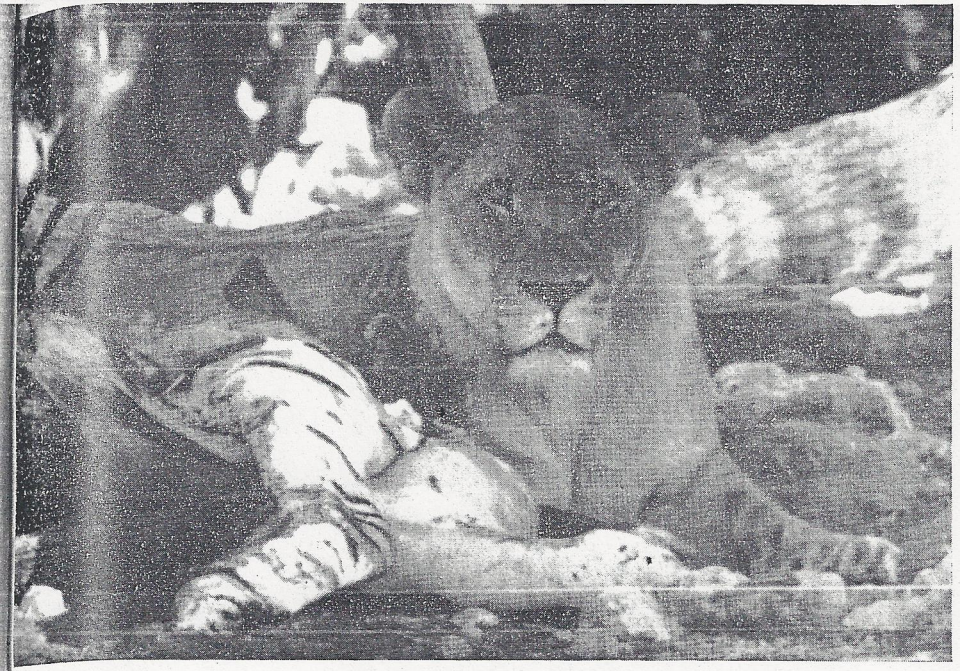
(Sgd.) E. B. Watts.
Administrative Officer-in-charge,
Rungwe District.

Each hunter was allocated an area and was given instructions that only elephants in the vicinity of cultivation could be hunted. The weakness of this scheme soon became apparent, for elephants carrying heavy ivory seldom raided crops, and these tuskers could be shot only by hunting further afield. Human nature being what it is, the hunters, out for profit, were more concerned with shooting elephants with big ivory than protecting cultivation by shooting elephants with small tusks. On many occasions these hunters, including myself, refused to shoot cultivation raiders because of their small ivory.

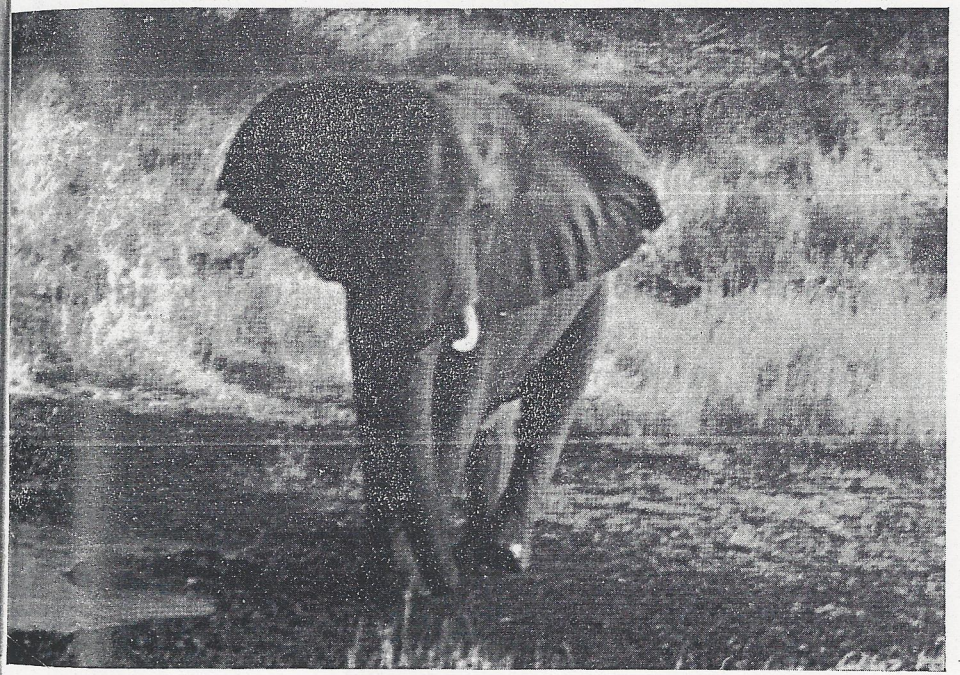
The first Governor's Licence granted to me was for twenty-five elephants, and completing this in a very short time I applied for and obtained a second Governor's Licence. The elephants on these licences were all shot in the Mkasu District, a sub-district of Mahenge, and I don't think more than a third of the elephants were actual raiders. On completing the second licence I applied for a third licence but the application was refused and this scheme was later abandoned. It was obvious that this scheme was of little value as a means of crop protection. It had another great weakness for the shooting was unbalanced as only bulls were shot, and no females.

During 1925 the Government of Tanganyika decided on another line of action against raiding elephants for by this time the damage caused by them had become a major problem. The Game Department engaged a number of Europeans for duty as cultivation protection officers on a temporary appointment basis. Among them were Micky Norton, David Blunt and Dusty Arundel, all elephant hunters of considerable experience. Each officer's area covered two or three administrative districts and each had under him a number of African Game Scouts whom he had to train in elephant hunting. The African Game Scouts were re-armed with ·400/·450 cal. single shot, falling block, Martini-action rifles to replace the ·303 cal. rifle with which they had previously been armed. These rifles proved very effective until the ejector mechanism began to fail and then the dangers were greatly increased. In 1928 the Game Department began replacing the ·400/·450 cal. single shot rifle with the Vickers ·404 cal. rifle. This was a magazine rifle with the long Mauser bolt action and proved to be an excellent rifle for this type of work.

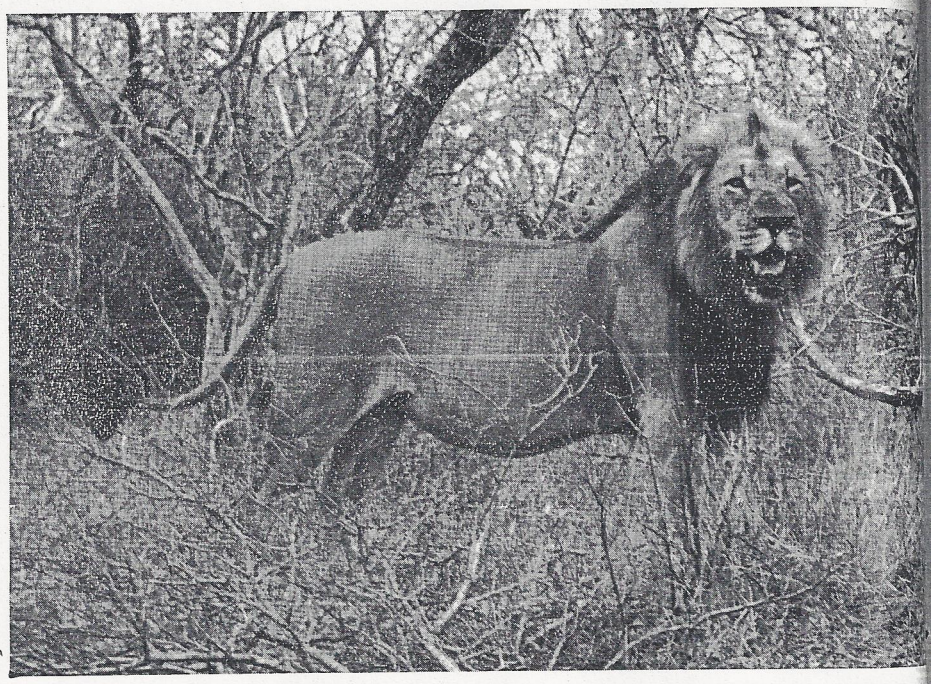
It was several years before all the ·400/·450 cal. rifles were withdrawn

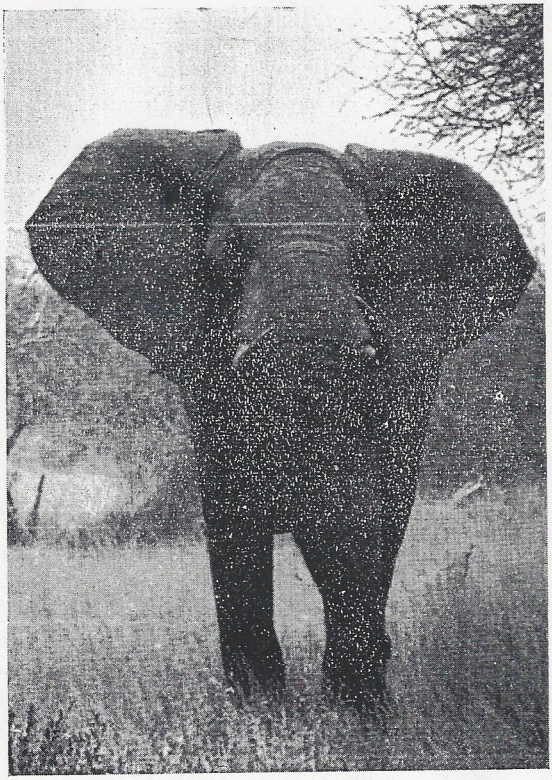


A lioness with her kill.



Young bull elephants, such as this, were often the worst crop-raiding offenders.





from service and the faulty ejector mechanisms caused the death of several Game Scouts. The scouts carried with them a ramrod, as used in a muzzle loader gun, and used it to eject the spent cartridge case. To do this took time and a scout with an angry, wounded elephant on his hands was at a disadvantage. I consider it extremely reprehensible of the Government to expect men to hunt elephants with faulty weapons.

During 1931 a Game Scout was killed by a buffalo due to the fact that after firing the first shot the cartridge case would not eject. His rifle was found nearby with a spent cartridge case jammed in the breech. Another Game Scout was killed by an elephant in 1928, the ejector mechanism had also failed on this occasion. This Game Scout, Fundi Tobaa, was one of the first scouts to be employed by the Game Department to shoot elephants on crop protection. I came to know him very well indeed during 1923–24. He was a first-class elephant hunter and we became good friends. Unfortunately, the elephant which got Tobaa did not kill him outright but with its trunk took him by the arm and in some way or other tore it off. Other injuries were also inflicted. When the elephant left him Tobaa was still alive but he died in great agony an hour or so later.

During 1928 a trade depression struck Tanganyika and strict economy in all Government departments was the order of the day. In the Game Department this meant the dismissal of the Cultivation Protection Officers, although one or two of them stayed on in the department with the rank of Game Ranger. Some of the Game Scouts were also discharged and the standard of work of those who were kept on deteriorated badly. Corruption became rife, due to lack of supervision by senior officers. This sad state of affairs was rectified in the mid 1930's, when more European staff was engaged.

The pattern of elephant control and crop protection brought into use at this time has been continued on similar lines until today. Game Rangers were placed in charge of one or two provinces, and those of them who were elephant hunters were staioned in the Southern and Eastern Provinces as there are more elephants in those two provinces than in all the rest of the territory. The Game Ranger recruited and trained his own African Game Scouts and when proficient the scout was stationed at some strategic central village. Patrolling out from his

headquarters the scout visited the different villages in his area and dealt with marauding elephants when necessary.

The Game Ranger was constantly on safari in his Range, inspecting his scouts and checking up on their work. If the Game Ranger found that the raiding elephants were too numerous for the resident Game Scout to cope with he instituted a local clearing-up campaign. Assisted by two or three Game Scouts he undertook some fairly heavy shooting and drove the elephants from the immediate vicinity into unoccupied bush country well away from cultivation.

During this period another method was tried out in three or four areas considered suitable for the purpose. This method was to clear a large area of elephants by driving them into unoccupied country large enough and suitable for that purpose, and then to contain them in that area. An ambitious scheme on these lines, and which entailed some heavy shooting, was undertaken in the Southern Province. The idea was that by heavy shooting along a wide front, it would be possible to drive the elephants from the Kilwa District through the Liwale District to a Game Reserve on the Mbarangandu River in western Liwale District. As there are thousands of square miles of dense thicket in the Kilwa and Liwale Districts, much of it being long distances from inhabited country, the difficulties of carrying out this ambitious task may be well imagined.

Many elephants were slaughtered, and during that year (1935) one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six were killed in the Southern Province and a large proportion in the Kilwa and Liwale Districts. The scheme was reported completely successful and the Kilwa District was said to be free of elephants, but it was wishful thinking. I believe the statement was made to try and justify the slaughter. The following year the amount of crop raiding by elephants in the Kilwa and Liwale Districts was as bad as ever, and during 1936 six hundred and sixty-nine elephants had to be killed in those two districts on crop protection.

During 1936 a similar elephant drive was started on the north bank of the Rufiji River in the Rufiji District, Eastern Province, the idea being to drive the elephants westward from that part of the district to the Selous Game Reserve and to contain them within that Reserve. In 1938 I took over the Eastern Province Range and after a careful survey of the elephant position in the Rufiji District, I reported that although

the elephant drive had been skilfully and courageously carried out it was a complete failure.

In spite of this Report I was ordered to continue with the scheme and on a larger scale. With a number of first-class Game Scouts I started operations south of the Rufiji River in an attempt to drive the elephants westward into a large uninhabited area adjoining the Selous Game Reserve. A great number of elephants was killed, some of them moved westward as required, but the majority moved southward into the northern Kilwa District. A screen of Game Scouts was then stationed to try and keep the elephants out of the cleared area by selective shooting. This holding operation was not altogether successful for herds went through the screen at night and moved back into the areas where they had been established for a great many years.

A second and thinner screen of scouts was then formed behind the front screen to repeat the drive. After two or three months it became obvious that the work of the second screen would never end for the elephants refused to stay where one wanted them. The futility of the scheme was finally proved when the Game Ranger, Liwale, on receiving complaints of serious damage to crops in the northern Kilwa District, sent a number of scouts to the area. There they carried out some heavy shooting with the result that all the elephants were back again in the Rufiji.

The only successful elephant drive I know of was a comparatively small affair carried out in the Tanga District, in north-eastern Tanganyika. The conditions and circumstances under which this drive took place were so completely different that no comparison can be made with the large-scale driving schemes which took place in the Eastern and Southern Provinces. The area where the successful drive took place lay just to the north of Pongwe on the Tanga–Arusha railway line. It was an area of dense coastal thicket of about a hundred square miles, completely surrounded by a broad belt of fully planted sisal plantations. Most of the sisal was mature and in full bearing.

The elephants did a considerable amount of damage to the sisal, particularly the younger sisal growing near the edge of the thicket. They pulled off the sisal leaves and chewed the soft base. At short distances apart, around the edges of sisal plantations, platforms or machans were built in suitable large trees. Every night these platforms

were occupied by Africans employed by the sisal planters, armed with muzzle loading muskets. When the elephants attempted to raid the sisal and went anywhere near one of the platforms, the guard would blaze off with his musket. Even on a moonless night it is not too difficult to hit the large bulk of an elephant, particularly if there is a group fairly close together and within reasonable range. Due to constant attack and wounding these elephants became extremely vicious and a herd would attack en masse.

I had been transferred from the Eastern Province Range to Lyamungu, Moshi, where the headquarters of the Game Department was then situated. The Range consisted of the eastern Serengetti Plains, the Northern Province and the Tanga Province, and shortly after taking over the Range I was asked to do something about the elephants in the Tanga District. I visited the area and met the sisal planters who complained bitterly about the damage done by the elephants. I also met Game Scout Joram who was stationed there and was supposed to deal with the raiders. He was not very happy about clearing the area. He explained that the elephants were a bad lot, that they charged en masse on getting one's scent, and if one of the herds scattered and a shot was fired they all converged on the shot. Joram asserted that hunting these elephants was a dangerous undertaking. Later, after hunting them myself, I had to agree with him. I asked him how he had managed to account for the two or three elephants he had shot during the past six months. He stated that he skirted the edge of the sisal and when he saw an elephant fired at it from a longish range, then bolted into the sisal as fast as he could and kept going. He returned to the spot the next day to see if the elephant was dead but even using these methods he said that on two or three occasions the elephants had nearly got him.

I had with me Game Scout Mohamed Mbemba, who was an experienced and reliable elephant hunter. On crop protection we had hunted elephants together on many occasions, both in the Rufiji and the Morogoro Districts and having each noted the reactions of the other during the few times we had been in a nasty situation, we had complete confidence in each other.

The next morning, accompanied by Mohamed Mbemba, Game Scout Joram and a local African as guide, we entered the thicket to hunt the elephants, and within half an hour we cut the fresh spoor of a

medium-sized herd. We followed along the spoor. The herd was moving slowly and as we went along I looked back to Scout Joram. He was lagging behind a bit and moving very carefully, a taut expression of fear on his face. This fear showed up in the expression in his eyes and the grey, ashen colour of his skin. His rifle, I noticed, was fully cocked, with the safety-catch off. He was carrying it in both hands, the muzzle pointing towards our backs, ready to bring it up to his shoulder in an instant. It was obvious that should we get up to the elephants and there was trouble, Joram was going to be a bigger danger to us than the elephants, even should they turn nasty.

I admonished him for carrying his rifle thus and suggested he should go back to camp. He refused to do this and asked what he could do if he met other elephants on his return journey. I made him put the safety-catch to 'safe' and ordered him to tag along behind with the guide; I told him he was not to fire, except in case of dire necessity, otherwise his punishment would be swift, severe and very painful.

The herd was feeding as it went and within an hour we heard them just ahead of us. Turning to shake a warning finger at Joram who was well to the rear, and from his appearance was in a state of abject terror, I moved forward to close with the elephants as quickly as possible.

The elephant paths in the thicket were well used and free of obstructions, and under conditions such as these I never wasted time with preliminary manoeuvring but always closed with the herd as quickly as possible. In this kind of hunting it was not a question of trying to pick a bull out of the herd but to reduce their numbers as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

With Mohamed at my heels we hurried forward along a much used elephant path and after covering about thirty yards I saw to my left, some ten to twelve yards away, a large cow and a three-quarter grown one standing in an area where the thicket was less dense. I was using my double-barrelled ·577 cal. rifle and succeeded in killing them both with one brain shot each.

Mohamed moved over to the fallen elephants, possibly to make sure they were dead, but I was certain they were for there is no mistaking the manner in which an elephant drops when hit in the brain. After the shot there was the sudden noise of moving elephants. It sounded as if they were moving from my left front, beyond the two dead elephants,

across to my right front. I continued along the path fairly quickly, hoping to intercept them as they crossed to my right. I turned a corner and came face to face with two young bulls coming towards me at a fast pace. At the same moment I heard the report of Mohamed's rifle. I took the leading bull with a frontal brain shot and immediately took the same shot on the second bull. But it was more hurried, not such a clear shot, and although the second young bull dropped to the ground from the manner in which he collapsed I knew I had missed the brain.

Again I heard the report of Mohamed's rifle and then all hell seemed let loose. Elephants crashed about all over the place, but could not be seen because of the dense thicket. There were continuous angry, shrill, staccato trumpeting blasts from several of them at the same time. I got back to where I had left Mohamed and found him standing near a dead cow. Just beyond it another elephant lay dead. Mohamed gave me a strained, welcoming grin and I stood beside him as a good proportion of the herd, which numbered about twenty-five to thirty, converged on us. For about half a minute the shooting was fast and furious, then it was suddenly over and the last elephant to come in was a cow with a calf at her flank. It was a most determined charge. She came from my right and I killed her instantly, also with a frontal brain shot, and she fell on her calf and killed it.

The herd then moved away, giving an occasional angry trumpeting blast as they went. We examined the fallen elephants to make sure they were dead and to cut off their tails. There were nine dead plus the calf which was lying partly under its dead mother. We called and hulloo'd for Joram and the guide but they had vanished and we had to make our own way back to camp where we found them. When the fury and commotion started they had run for it and had not stopped until they were clear of the thicket and well into the sisal.

I hunted there for another ten days and during that time we were able to kill a further twelve elephants. Two of the herds we met were aggressive and gave us a few tricky moments but nothing like the encounter with the first herd. There were other duties I had to attend to in the Range, so I left, taking Mohamed with me as I did not care to leave him to try and cope with the elephants on his own. Joram was instructed to stay at home until I returned and on no account to hunt

elephants. These orders were quite superfluous since nothing would have enticed him into those thickets on his own.

Some three weeks later I was able to return to the area, bringing with me two African Game Scouts who were fully trained elephant hunters and had been sent to me, on request, by the Game Ranger of the Southern Province. Hunting out in pairs, Mohamed and I together, and the two Game Scouts together, we worked hard and gave the herds no rest. Two weeks later I had to leave to investigate reports that game animals in the Same District were infected with rinderpest, but by that time we had completely knocked all aggression out of the elephants. The difficulty now was to get more than one elephant at each encounter.

Returning after three weeks, I found that the two Game Scouts had done good work while I was away, and with Mohamed to help me we stepped up the pressure and hunted all out. After nine days of hard hunting, during which we had considerable success, we suddenly failed to find any elephants or even fresh signs of them. We discovered that during one night all the remaining elephants had joined forces and moved out together. Travelling northwards towards the Kenya border they had passed through a solid belt of sisal several miles broad.

The total number of elephants killed in this operation was fifty-two. Whether any ever returned to that island of dense thicket I do not know. None returned during the following twelve months and then I was transferred to the Southern Highlands Province. But I doubt whether elephants would travel through that broad belt of sisal, except under strong pressure.

Joram accompanied me twice more while hunting in the thickets but it was plain he had lost whatever nerve he may have had for elephant hunting so I moved him on to other duties.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Men who carry out Elephant Control in Tanganyika

Elephant control and crop protection work is in the efficient hands of the Game Department. It requires much technical skill and endurance from the officers in charge, and much courage and hard work from those who do the actual shooting. Most of the shooting is done by African Game Scouts and a finer body of men or better elephant hunters than these scouts employed on elephant control in Tanganyika would be impossible to find anywhere. They are hand picked men, very carefully trained and mostly recruited from the tribes that produced the professional elephant hunters (Walumba) of the old pre-European administration days.

It was not easy to get suitable men for this kind of work and I found the following methods the best for recruiting and training the men. A Game Scout was allowed one permanent porter who would travel with him when called upon by the headman of a village in the area to deal with raiding elephants. He was selected as a porter because of his knowledge of hunting with a muzzle loader, and he accompanied the scout as a tracker while hunting elephants. During this period the porter learned how to clean and care for a rifle and how to operate the bolt action. Through constant touring of the Range and inspecting the Game Scouts, I got to know these permanent porters fairly well, and

when a vacancy for a Game Scout occurred I selected the most likely man among the porters for the job.

The recruit was first given some training with a rifle on short range target practice and instructed by my orderly and myself what the duties of a Game Scout involved. He then accompanied me on my tours and it was seldom indeed one did not have to deal with raiding elephants on each of these safaris. The recruit was with me when I hunted the raiders and I watched his reactions, noted his skill as a tracker and his manner of approaching the elephants to be dealt with. If he acquitted himself well I allowed him to shoot two or three elephants at different times, usually those that offered a fairly easy shot. On several occasions I was surprised how effectively a recruit did the shooting. This led me to the conclusion that the scout for whom they worked as a porter had allowed them to shoot elephants on a number of occasions.

The recruit then spent three months with an experienced and reliable scout to finish off his training and to learn some of the finer points of elephant hunting. If the older scout gave a favourable report I took him with me on a safari and tested him out against two or three elephants. If he passed this test he was given an area of his own. The majority of the most successful elephant hunters had no previous training or, at the most, a perfunctory training with a rifle. Those men were natural hunters, having started with a muzzle loader gun and lived in elephant country all their lives. It was not easy to teach them to use a rifle properly, nevertheless it was easier to do that than teach a good rifle shot to become an elephant hunter, particularly if he had no intimate knowledge of elephants or no particular aptitude for elephant hunting.

A scout working on his own was stationed at a village carefully chosen for its central position and was responsible for a given area containing a number of villages. When elephants raided the crops of one of the outlying villages the headman sent a messenger to the scout who then dealt with the situation. Not only had these scouts to be good elephant hunters but they had to be men of considerable integrity. There was always some dealer in illicit ivory who was ready to buy any number of tusks, and it was comparatively safe for a scout to dispose of an occasional pair of tusks, worth a few months pay, in this way.

One way of keeping a check on the scouts was through a careful control over the expenditure of ammunition. The scout with a bad average was either discharged or put on other work, for he was either wounding a number of elephants or selling ivory to an illicit ivory buyer. Some of the best scouts stationed in the worst raiding areas killed up to fifty elephants or more each year, with a gross expenditure of ammunition giving an average sometimes as low as 2·5 rounds per elephant killed.

As an example, when I was in charge of elephant control in the Eastern Province we killed on average one thousand elephants each year, and in one year the gross expenditure of ammunition gave an average of 3·36 rounds per elephant killed; the following year the average was 3·81 rounds. These figures included ammunition used by recruits while being trained on the rifle range, and by partly trained men. It gives an idea of the quality of the Game Scouts. Obviously, with figures such as these, few elephants got away wounded but this check was not a complete safeguard against a scout who wished to be dishonest.

To keep the scouts up to the mark and fully efficient, I had to be on safari continually, visiting each scout as often as possible, taking an intimate interest in his affairs, and going with him to deal with raiding elephants when in his area. By doing this one saw whether the scout was standing up to his work. If the man had become nervy with elephants it was better to transfer him to work where there would be fewer or none at all to deal with, or to an area where the bush was more open, easier and less dangerous to hunt in. To get the best out of the men it was necessary for the Game Ranger in charge to be as good, or even better, elephant hunter than the best of the scouts.

It was interesting to watch the different Game Scouts in action against elephants, for although big-game hunting may not form character it certainly develops it. It was most remarkable how each man's methods and actions when in close contact with elephants conformed to their general character. One scout, Kaloko Mitanda, a Nyassa, with long experience, was small and delicate of build, timid in the extreme, and if spoken to in a harsh manner would tremble and find it difficult to articulate. In many ways he resembled a hedge-sparrow and when working a herd he took dainty, tiny steps, his eyes

became bright and eager and he appeared more birdlike than ever. Because of his excellent record and the good work he did, Game Scout Kaloko Mitanda received the Queen's Certificate of Honour and Badge during 1952.

Another scout, Mohamed Mbemba of the Angoni tribe, also of long experience, was a large phlegmatic man, slow of speech and when close to elephants became more stolid and taciturn than ever. He never made any unnecessary movement and was perfectly steady under the most trying conditions. After I was transferred from the Eastern Province Range, Mohamed got into some sort of trouble and was under a cloud so he came to me as my orderly. On many occasions we dealt with raiding elephants together and several times he proved himself to be the steadiest man I had ever had with me when hunting elephants.

A third scout named Garrus, also of the Angoni tribe, with shorter experience than the two previously mentioned scouts, was a turbulent man, always hard-up, continually getting into scrapes and troubles of all description. He caused me endless trouble getting him out of his difficulties, but I bore with him because basically there was nothing wrong with him, and he was a first-class elephant hunter.

Garrus spoke rapidly, could not stand still and was always restless and fidgety. It was rather trying hunting elephants with him in thick stuff. At thirty or forty yards from the herd he was at my heels. At fifteen or twenty yards, when I was about to fire, a movement on my right or left would attract my attention and it would be this man, probably with an elephant standing partly between us. When I fired my first shot he would fire also, selecting his own animal. On one occasion he fired some five yards away on my left after I had fired my first shot, then a few seconds later he fired about five yards to my right, then very quickly again some twenty yards ahead. How he achieved this I do not know. This was while we were working a large herd in thick stuff where all movement had to be rapid and accurate.

During 1944 Garrus was stationed at Kisaki, southern Morogoro District, and had been called upon to deal with elephants that had been raiding crops at the village of Kirengwa near the Selous Game Reserve. It was usual and advisable when in the bush in areas such as that, to carry one's rifle fully loaded and cocked. After dealing with the raiding elephants Garrus returned towards Kirengwa village and soon reached

the outlying cultivated area of the village. On striking a small footpath he prepared to remove all the cartridges from his rifle, as Game Scouts had standing orders to do on reaching the precincts of a village. A native woman working alone among the crops came rushing towards him screaming. Garrus looked up, with his rifle now in the full firing position, and saw a lion chasing the woman. He fired and killed the lion, only a few yards from him, as the woman threw herself prostrate at his feet.

This lion proved to be one of three man-eaters which had caused trouble in the area. During 1946 Garrus was mauled by a man-eating lion. He succeeded in killing it but received such serious injuries to his right hand that he was not able to handle or fire a rifle properly. After being kept on light duty for several months he was discharged because of his infirmity which, in view of his past services, is difficult to understand for there were a number of other posts which did not necessitate the use of, even the carrying, of a rifle.

That is a fair cross-section of the best Game Scouts I had under me in the Eastern Province from 1938 until 1944. They were masters of their trade and without doubt were the salt of all the Africans employed by Government or anyone else in Tanganyika.

The work of elephant control is arduous and has an element of risk about it, not only for the African Game Scouts but for the Game Ranger in charge if he does his job conscientiously and well. The steady, continuous hunting and killing of elephants did tend to sicken one at times but not to the extent one would imagine. The elephants had to be shot to keep their numbers steady and within reason. By doing this and protecting crops at the same time the work seemed well worth while. Without this control by shooting, and no successful alternative has as yet been devised, the vast number of elephants would get completely out of hand. Crops would be devastated, causing chaos in the Southern and Eastern Provinces and other parts of the country, and the sufferings of the African peasant cultivator would be grievous.

Casualties are fairly frequent among Game Scouts and fatalities averaged three or four each year, most of the deaths being caused by elephants. I have never known these deaths affect the morale of the Game Scouts, even when the scout killed had been well known and highly respected for his prowess as an elephant hunter. The great

majority of Game Scouts had a belief in fatalism, that death was the will of God. This belief is held by all bush Africans. Knowing my scouts so well, often with an intimate knowledge of their private and family affairs, the death of any of those men always seemed a personal loss.

Among those killed were some outstanding men. One was Game Scout Rashidi bin Motomwihako, who was killed by an elephant while on crop protection duties in Mahenge District, Eastern Range during 1938. Rashidi was a reliable and trustworthy Game Scout and during his service in the Game Department had killed over five hundred elephants under various control schemes and crop protection. Both he and the elephant were found dead, lying near to each other in a native garden the elephant had been raiding.

In the Southern Province another Game Scout had very bad luck indeed when he was killed by an elephant. He had followed a small herd from the cultivation they had been raiding and on getting up to them succeeded in killing one. The rest of the herd came for him; such attacks by a herd were not uncommon and were a determined and organised effort to destroy the hunter. They were never a blind stampede, which happened to go in the direction of the hunter, nor a charge which, if it failed to account for him, would keep its general direction and keep on going. In this kind of attack they hunted one down by following the scent of the trail like a hound.

The country where this tragedy occurred was fairly open scrubland, with here and there an antbear hole which are often used by warthogs as lairs. It is seldom that one finds a warthog at home, at least not during the day, and when they enter the holes they do so stern first. In this way should a leopard or lion follow the warthog into the hole it would face the formidable tushes of the warthog who would have the better of such an encounter under those conditions.

The scout fired the remaining rounds in his rifle at the charging herd of elephants in an attempt to stop or turn them. But without effect so he turned and ran for it with the elephants gaining on him. In desperation he dived down an antbear hole, but the 25 to 1 chance failed to come off as there was a warthog at home. The unfortunate scout was out of the hole probably faster than he went in but by then the elephants were on him and killed him.

Game Scout Saidi bin Abdullah had a charmed life and I think it will be agreed that he led a life which was somewhat more exciting than the average. During the 1914–18 war he was badly wounded while fighting as an askari for the British forces in Tanganyika. After the war he joined the Game Department and while hunting a man-eating lion near Kilosa during 1925 succeeded in getting three bullets into the lion as it came for him. The charge was driven home and the lion died on top of the fallen Saidi with his hand in its mouth.

He was gored and tossed by a rhino in 1930 in the Kisaki area and his last narrow escape—apart from being charged by elephants a few times—was also in the Kisaki area in 1934. Saidi followed some raiding elephants, wounded one which charged him, and in the scurry was picked up by the elephant, carried for some distance and then tossed away. Although he landed in thicket Saidi was badly bruised and shaken but he crawled to his rifle and shot and killed the elephant.

Saidi bin Abdullah was the Head Game Scout stationed at Kisaki and served under me when I was in charge of the Eastern Province Range. I got to know Saidi very well and hunted elephants with him on many occasions. He was an outstanding elephant hunter and a man of great character. He retired from the Game Department in 1945, full of years and greatly respected. He was a bit of a martinet and stood no nonsense whatever from recruits who were sent to him for training.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Game Cropping

When I joined the Tanganyika Game Department in 1938 there were five other European Game Rangers and a Game Warden. We were responsible for all game animals in the whole of the territory, including those in what is now the Serengeti National Park. The work of a Game Ranger in Tanganyika was varied, interesting, at times exciting, and there was considerable freedom of action so that in spite of the comparatively low salary I do not know of any job that could have been so worth while or satisfying. The main duties, except for the ones on elephant control, were conservation of game, detection and prevention of poaching, dealing with man-eating and stock raiding lions and leopards, detection of illicit ivory and rhino horn dealers and prosecuting offenders in a magistrate's court.

Apart from their general duties the Game Rangers were encouraged to make a specialised study of a section of the wild life in the territory. A Game Ranger selected his own line of study and perhaps changed later to a subject he thought more interesting. This specialisation proved most successful. Ionides became a world authority on East African reptiles. Swynnerton became a world authority on the rodents and lesser mammals of Tanganyika. I specialised in elephants. So did Game Ranger Nicholson who joined the department after the Second World War. Much fresh knowledge was obtained, new species and subspecies

were discovered and described. Material of great value to the scientist, student and systematist was produced in the way of articles, papers, check lists and specimens sent to museums in different parts of the world.

The Game Department was singularly fortunate in the different Game Wardens who, in turn, were in control of the department. They understood the European Game Rangers who served under them, some of whom were men of great character. Liberal allowance was made for their various idiosyncrasies. The Game Rangers *had* to be given considerable liberty of action within a broad, loose, unwritten game policy; this was necessary if the department was to function with any degree of efficiency. Each Game Ranger had vast tracts of country under his control. Postal communications was slow and they were sometimes cut off for long periods during the rainy season. They were expected to be on safari in the bush for a period of nine months of the year, and a few Game Rangers were out for longer periods than that. The members of the department both black and white, were as fine a body of men as served a Government Department in any part of Africa. The majority of them were men of character, loyal, and dedicated to their work.

The Game Warden was fortunate if he was able to visit a Game Ranger once every two or three years and the periods between such visits were usually much longer. This meant that important decisions had to be made and carried out by the Game Ranger on the spot. Game Rangers, for the most part, were not in the least afraid of making such decisions, and accepting full responsibility for them. In fact most of the few mistakes they made were those of commission and not ommission and mistakes of such description are generally easier to rectify and more readily excused. Any attempt by a Game Warden to impose tight headquarters control over Game Rangers could not have worked.

It is an unfortunate fact that Tanganyika has never had a governor, a chief secretary or any other high administrative official who was in the least game minded. One or two governors professed to having some interest, but it was only from the point of view of seeing game and was as superficial as that of the average tourist. The Game Department was always treated, and looked upon as the Cinderella of the

A baboon with its young.

different departments. It was often referred to by those in high authority as the 'luxury department'. If the financial position of the territory necessitated economies it was the finance of the Game Department which was first to be cut. The annual battles the Game Wardens had with the Finance Committee in Dar-es-Salaam to obtain sufficient funds to carry on the department, even in a curtailed form, were invariably extremely bitter.

During 1937 and 1938 which was a period of financial stringency in Tanganyika the total abolition of the Game Department was seriously considered by those in high authority. Had it not been for the crop protection and elephant control work, developed and carried out by the department it certainly would have been abolished. The protection and conservation of the vast herds of game animals the territory then had both inside and outside the Game Reserves was not even considered. This attitude of Government was difficult to understand.

Apart from the tremendous saving for the territory in agricultural produce the Game Department consistently showed a direct profit each year. During the five years, 1953 to 1957 inclusive, the average yearly balance of revenue over expenditure was over £45,000. No other department showed an excess of revenue over expenditure. One or two governors and others in high office piously stated that it was not Government policy that any department should show a profit, yet the request that profits made by the Game Department be used for the benefit of game was fiercely resisted.

The idea of game cropping had often occurred to me but it was not until 1949 that I was able to carry out any such plan. During 1947 and 1948 there had been a partial failure of the rains in the whole of the Lake Rukwa valley with the result that crops had been poor. The 1949 rains were even worse, causing a complete failure of grain crops, and there was a bad famine throughout the whole area. The administration made arrangements to move in supplies of grain to relieve hunger. At the meeting called to discuss the famine problem the question arose of game meat to augment the inadequate supply of grain. The administrative officers concerned favoured the idea of issuing large amounts of black powder and instructing the owners of muzzle loader guns to go out and kill what animals they could, including game animals in the Rukwa Game Controlled Area.

I pointed out to the meeting that the haphazard killing of small game animals would be of little real value. No hunter who succeeded in killing two or three of the smaller antelopes would take any of the meat back to the village but would dry and hide the meat in the bush for himself and family. The proposal I put forward was that I would tour the area and station a Game Scout at each suitable place. There was an adequate number of larger game animals in the Rukwa Valley and these could be cropped by Game Scouts in sufficient numbers to relieve the famine.

This was done and a Game Scout stationed at a large village, or a cluster of smaller ones, killed two elephants a month. A scout stationed at a smaller village on the lake shore killed perhaps two hippo and two buffalo a month. Only buffalo, hippo and elephant were cropped. The plan worked extremely well and saved many lives.

During 1950 I was on safari in the northern Rukwa Valley and to get to the Sumbawanga part of my range I had to pass through the southern section of Mpanda District. Mpanda District was outside my Range but on my way through I asked the headmen of several villages about the food position and what had happened during the famine. They told me the Government had helped with supplies of food and the District Commissioner had provided a large amount of gun-powder. He told the people to go out into the bush and shoot all the game animals they could. The owners of muzzle loaders hunted intensively but dried the meat of any animals they shot far out in the bush. The dried meat they kept for themselves and families and the surplus was sold at exorbitant prices. Many more people died of famine in the Rukwa Valley section of the Mpanda District than would have done had the larger animals, of which there were plenty, been cropped in a systematic manner.

There is no question but that large numbers of elephants must be killed every year to protect African crops and to keep their number in the territory within reason. In the Southern and Eastern Provinces the protection of cultivation is the main controlling factor in agricultural output. A number of methods have been tried to keep elephants out of cultivation, other than by shooting, but with little or no success. Maroons, electric fences, fences of live spiney sisal, ropes strung around cultivation to which are attached tins and pieces of iron which jingle alarmingly when the rope is pulled were all tried. There was also an

ingenious contraption which operated in a similar manner to a carbide lamp. This contraption built up a pressure of carbide gas and this ignited every three or four minutes going off with a loud bang like a rifle shot. Repellents were tried, one a strong-smelling creosote chemical placed in bottles with wicks and fastened in trees around the area to be protected. Another repellent used with limited success was the burning of pieces of old motor tyres in fires placed on the upwind side of the area raided.

Effective crop protection is tied up to a great extent with the distribution of population. When the population in an area is concentrated in large villages the protection of crops can be fully effective if the shooting is carried out in a correct manner. Where the population is scattered over a wide area, in small hamlets of three or four families each it is impossible to give adequate crop protection.

During the past thirty years the number of elephants killed by the Game Department on elephant control and crop protection averaged between two thousand and two thousand five hundred per year, and I do not think that adequate crop protection can be given by shooting fewer. There is little doubt that the number of elephants is increasing in Tanganyika and, except possibly the baboon, it is the only animal increasing in that country. To make an accurate count of the number of elephants would be impossible due to large areas of country being totally uninhabited. Even the use of aeroplanes for this purpose would be of little value as much of the elephant country is forest, thicket and high cane grass which effectively hides the elephants from the air. Their migratory habits would also add to the difficulties if any such count was attempted.

I put the total elephant population of Tanganyika at about seventy-five thousand, and of these at least one-third would be breeding cows. Authorities agree that the gestation period of an African elephant is in the region of twenty-two months, and there is agreement that the females start breeding at the age of ten to twelve years and reproduce every four years. Assuming that the estimate of the total elephant population is reasonably correct, natural increase could be in the region of five thousand plus per year.

While it is considered that the present rate of killing will have to continue indefinitely, if adequate crop protection is to be given and the

elephant population kept within bounds, I do think that the methods employed up until now are most wasteful. During 1959 I put forward a proposal for the rational cropping of elephants combined with crop protection throughout the territory. Unfortunately the proposal was not accepted; in fact during that year a scheme was put under way to yet again drive all the elephants out of the Kilwa District, Southern Province.

The proposals I put forward were based on the logical outcome from past experience gained on the various methods used to protect crops from elephants. Since elephant control and crop production were first started in the early 1920's, and carried out in various forms ever since, it is estimated that the Tanganyika Game Department has killed some seventy to eighty thousand elephants. This is a large number and it has provided a great quantity of meat. Because of tsetse fly it is impossible to keep domestic stock over the greater part of Tanganyika and the only sources of protein for the Africans in those parts are game meat and fish. Nearly all Africans, even the Mohamedans, eat elephant meat. The Game Department has never really faced up to this fact, and they only agreed to Native Game Licences under pressure from higher authority.

Instead of the 'Game Preservation-at-all-costs' attitude that has been taken up until now, a bolder and more progressive attitude should be taken. This should be done in the form of game management and game cropping for the perpetual benefit of the inhabitants, human and animal, of the territory.

Under the present system of elephant control large numbers are shot over a comparatively short period each year, whether in an elephant drive scheme or at the time of the harvest period on normal crop protection. During those periods of shooting there is a glut of elephant meat and much of it goes to waste. The cutting up of a dead elephant into strips and smoke-drying the meat is a lengthy process and when there are two or three, or even more, elephants lying dead at the same time the villagers are quite incapable of coping with such a large amount of meat. Much of it is thus consumed by scavengers or goes putrid. During the long non-shooting periods there is a shortage of meat and then the Africans take to hunting soft skinned game of which they kill a considerable number every year. They hunt purely for the

meat, not as a form of sport; during those periods also the elephants become bold and return to the close vicinity of settled areas.

For a number of years I was in charge of elephant control work in one of the two most important provinces of Tanganyika and we were killing just over one thousand elephants per year on crop protection. My experience proved that the most effective way to protect the crops was steady shooting throughout the whole year within a radius of four to five miles of a settled area. Very few more elephants, if any, were shot in the long run, and certainly far less than are shot in an organised elephant drive. Crop protection was fully effective, poaching of soft-skinned game was reduced, for there was a constant supply of elephant meat, and there were no vociferous complaints to the administration of elephant damage, which is often a ruse to obtain meat.

If this system were adopted it would apply to almost the whole of the Eastern and Southern Provinces and to a great many local areas throughout Tanganyika. It could also apply to parts of other African territories where there is an elephant problem. Each settled area in elephant country would be treated on its merits, the number of people would be known and information on the minimum protein requirements for an individual could be obtained. A careful survey of the elephant population in the area should be taken and a decision should be taken as to the number of elephants that could be cropped in each area every year.

As with the present method of crop control the ivory obtained from the elephants killed would not only cover the costs of the scheme but also the total cost of running the Game Department at its present strength, plus a considerable surplus.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Njombe Man-eating Lions

Towards the end of 1945 Captain M. Moore, V.C. the Game Warden of Tanganyika, transferred me from Lyamungu—then the headquarters of the Game Department—to the Southern Highlands Province Range. He briefed me thoroughly on what my duties would be in the Range. The main duty, and which had top priority, was the game-free area along the Northern Rhodesian-Tanganyika border. A bush pole fence some one hundred and fifty miles long had been built along the border. This fence was patrolled by three European game observers, each having teams of armed African Game Scouts. Their duties were to shoot out all game to a depth of some five miles on both sides of the fence and to prevent the movement of domestic stock across the corridor.

This was to prevent the spread of rinderpest from Tanganyika to the countries in the south. South Africa was particularly concerned for rinderpest reached as far south as the Cape in 1896. That visitation almost paralysed South Africa, for most of the transport and farming in the country was done with trek oxen. As the name rinderpest implies, cattle as well as certain species of game animals are most susceptable to the disease.

The Njombe man-eaters were also discussed. Both the Game Warden and myself had heard of these man-eating lions but for some

reason or other the seriousness of the position had not filtered out of the Southern Highlands Province. Dealing with the occasional outbreak of man-eating lions was routine work for all the Game Rangers. When any such outbreak occurred it was advisable to place as many Game Scouts as possible in the area and concentrate all efforts on the problem. This was not only to save as many lives as possible but because if a man-eater continues to kill and eat people for any length of time it develops an almost supernatural cunning. This often makes the hunting down and killing of such a lion a lengthy and difficult task.

Thinking that the Njombe man-eaters were the usual two or three, and having dealt with such cases before, I did not feel unduly perturbed. Knowing that the killings had been going on for a considerable time I thought that the job of accounting for the man-eaters would probably take longer, entail more hard work than usual and left it at that. On taking over the Range I spent a number of days in the office going through the files. This was to acquaint myself with details of the Range, where the Game Scouts were stationed, the elephant control set-up, patrol arrangements to protect Game Preserves and other details. After a few days in the office I began to realise that the Njombe lions were not the usual run-of-the-mill man-eaters.

Three days after taking over the Range I made a courtesy call on Mr. Flynn, the Provincial Commissioner. We discussed game matters in general so far as his Province was concerned. He asked me to do everything I possibly could to deal with the Njombe man-eaters as the number of killings was the cause of great concern. The next day I received a telegram from W. Wenban-Smith the District Commissioner, Njombe, which read: 'I beg you to apply earliest attention to man-eaters stop conditions in this District pathetic.' Wenban-Smith was stationed at Temeke outside Dar-es-Salaam, also at Bagamoyo when I was in charge of the Eastern Province Range. He was one of the most level-headed administrative officers and because of this his telegram had to be accepted at its face value.

I left in my truck for Njombe, the administrative headquarters of the district. Wenban-Smith was glad to see me. He told me that the district was completely demoralised and the number of deaths caused by the man-eaters was truly appalling. As is usual in all cases of man-eating lions witchcraft was involved and from what Wenban-Smith

told me it was particularly bad in this case. After leaving Njombe I toured the area in which the man-eaters were operating to get a first-hand picture of the situation.

The greater part of Njombe District is occupied by the Wabena tribe and their country is known as Ubena. The area in which the lions operated lay in the western part of Njombe District and included the sub-chiefdoms of Jifike with the courthouse and offices at Wangingombe, and Sub-Chief Bernardi at Mtwango. The other troubled region was occupied by a section of another tribe, the Wasangu, Sub-Chief Mujengwa of Rujewa, adjacent to and lying to the south of the two other sub-chiefdoms.

The size of the area covered by the man-eaters was roughly fifty miles by thirty miles (fifteen hundred square miles). The vegetation varied from knee high tough grass to shoulder high oat grass; from open parkland to brachystegia-combretum bush, including dense secondary growth of those two trees and large areas of dense thicket. The country was flat to undulating forming a plateau rising from four thousand feet to about six thousand feet altitude. It is cattle country and prior to the trouble the people mainly lived in scattered, small family hamlets of three or four huts. After the man-eating became bad the people moved gradually into villages or settlements for greater protection. The Ubena country was not game country and never had been, although there were numbers of wild pig, grysbok and duiker. The southern part of the area around Rujewa and Igawa and along the Mbarali River was good game country.

On my tour of the affected area I met the sub-chiefs concerned and talked the matter over with them as well as with a number of headmen and sundry natives. I also visited the Rev. Martin Nordfeldt, a Swedish Lutheran missionary, whose mission church and buildings at Ilembula were in the centre of the worst area. The Rev. Nordfeldt was married and had a son about seven years old whom he would not allow off the enclosed verandah even in daytime. Indeed, a few evenings before I arrived at the mission their house-boy left for his home, a short distance away, at sunset carrying a lighted hurricane lamp. While passing the large mission church some forty yards from the house a lion sprang on him and carried him into a nearby maize field, where he was eaten, other lions joining in the feast.

The missionary gave me the impression that he considered the lions were a visitation of the Devil and later, after some experience of them, I could not have agreed more. They proved to be the most fiendish and devilish monsters I have ever heard or read about. The renowned man-eaters of Tsavo were very small fry compared with what these proved to be.

I also visited Kidugalo, a mission station which had been converted into a Polish refugee camp. The refugees were mainly women but there were also a few Italian prisoners of war who did the maintenance work on the station. The Commandant of the camp, Mr. Wagner, was a keen hunter and a first-class shot. He had erected machans in a few suitable trees down in a valley through which the lions sometimes travelled. He had spent two or three nights a week in these machans but with no success. Two of the Italian P.O.W.'s had shown interest and several times, suitably armed, had spent the night in a machan with Mr. Wagner. On one occasion they had all arranged to spend a particular night together in a machan when something cropped up which prevented Mr. Wagner going. The Italians, equipped with rifles, blankets, torches and thermos flasks, decided to go by themselves.

This proved to be the only occasion that the lions came near the machans when occupied but the Italians failed to take advantage of this. The lions reached the bottom of the tree, started the rasping, coughing, grunting sound lions sometimes give and one even attempted to claw its way up the tree. This proved too much for the Italians. One dropped his torch and rifle from the platform, and in their mad scramble to be first to the top of the tree one of them almost fell on to the lions below. There, in the topmost branches, the half frozen and frightened men clung for the rest of the night, nor did they descend until Wagner came to see what had happened to them the next morning.

After long discussions with the sub-chiefs and headmen concerned and after addressing several *barazas* (a gathering of people at a chief's or headman's headquarters) the results were not helpful. It soon became apparent that the general demoralisation and abject fear was the result not only of the killings by the man-eaters but the superstition and witchcraft surrounding them. The only reliable information I could get was from Jifike, the sub-chief of Wangingombe. Jifike was a man of integrity and held a position of some importance. Due to deep-rooted

superstition concerning the lions, the local people of all ranks, regardless of what education a number of them may have had, were reluctant to discuss the man-eaters.

Jifike told me that lions first started killing people during 1932 and continued until 1940. The number of people taken during that period was considerable but the rate of killing was slightly less than that which took place subsequent to 1940. During that year the lions left his country entirely but he could not give any explanation as to why they had left. I pressed Jifike for further information on this point but he was extremely diffident and side-stepped the question. There is no doubt that this was due to some extent to superstition and fear of witchcraft.

In 1941 the lions returned to Jifike's area and the killings were considerable. A record of all the people killed in the sub-chiefdom of Wangingombe from 1941 onwards was kept. This record accounted for their own people only and did not include strangers travelling in search of work on the Mufindi Tea Estates or in Iringa. The numbers were:

1941	people taken	96
1942		67
1943		15
1944		31
1945		21
1946		19
	Total	249

The two other sub-chiefdoms where the man-eaters operated were those of Sub-Chief Bernardi of Mtwango, whose losses were about the same as those of Sub-Chief Jifike, and Sub-Chief Mujengwa of Rujewa whose losses were the greatest.

The recorded killings of two hundred and forty-nine people covered six years out of a period of fifteen years during which the killings took place. The figures accounted only for the people of one sub-chiefdom out of three and in the other two the killings were at least as numerous. There were also killings by lions outside the areas covered by these three adjoining sub-chiefdoms. It would be reasonable therefore to give a conservative estimate of deaths caused by the lions at not less

than one thousand and the number could very well have been fifteen hundred killed.

Many of the people were sceptical about my being able to do anything. Others were so much in awe of the man-eaters and the witchcraft concerning them that they would not even discuss lions with me. Even headmen told me quite openly that it would be foolish of me to attempt to hunt the lions. They admitted that the spoor was similar to that of lions but that I could follow the spoor as long as I wished and would never get up to any animal resembling a lion.

They stated that these lions were not real lions at all but werlions or simba mtu. That is to say, that certain unknown men, possibly one or two of them returning from the dead, took on the appearance of lions. After they had killed and eaten some person or persons they would travel a distance as lions and then revert to their normal appearance as men. That is also a reason why it is unwise to say anything derogatory about these lions, or even say the word lion (simba). If the man-eaters are mentioned at all it is better to refer to them as creatures or insects of the bush (dudu ya porini). Who knows, one of the nearby persons may be one of the werlions, in which case any mention of the man-eaters as such would mean that one's days are certainly numbered. In fact it is better not to speak about them at all.

That was the set-up throughout the whole of that part of the Ubena country where the man-eaters operated with the exception of one comparatively small area. This was the large village of Iyayi and surrounding scattered hamlets each of three or four huts. The area was under a village headman who in turn came under the control of Jifike, the sub-chief of Wangingombe. It was Jifike who first told me about this extraordinary case of witchcraft after I had been hunting the man-eaters for several months and we came to know each other very well indeed. Once or twice before I had seen how the course of events will often play into the hands of a shrewd witch-doctor but never in such a remarkable manner as in this case.

This witch-doctor was a man named Matamula who, until shortly before lions started killing people in 1932, was the headman, or jumbe, of Iyayi Village and surrounding hamlets. Because of corruption and other misdemeanours he was removed from the post of headman but never gave up trying to regain his old position which carried a small

salary. Also, there were many perquisites attached to the post. Matamula was replaced by a man named Ulaya who carried out his duties in a conscientious manner.

The toll the man-eaters were taking in the vicinity of Iyayi and the nearby surrounding country averaged something in the region of fifty lives each year. Under these circumstances one can well imagine the state of fear and apathy to which the local inhabitants had been reduced.

It was in this atmosphere of fear that the witch-doctor Matamula began his evil operations. He made it known to the people of the area that he had full and complete control over the man-eaters. The organisation which Matamula professed to have set up was simple and designed to impress the local people. He had two assistants, the first or chief assistant was Mamisi Saidi and the second was Mkakiwa. It was said that the duty of Mkakiwa was to herd the lions in a small area near to Igawa and close to the boundary between the Mbeya and Njombe Districts. This was some thirty miles from Iyayi Village and Mkakiwa had to see that the lions did not stray and were always on hand when Matamula sent for them. The other assistant, Hamisi Saidi, on receiving orders from Matamula would go to Mkakiwa near Igawa and his duty was to take over some of the lions. Taking these lions Hamisi Saidi was to conduct them to Matamula who, after briefing them, sent them to a particular area to kill and eat a certain person.

The local Africans firmly believed in this power which Matamula professed to have over the lions. To obtain what they thought would be protection from the man-eaters they willingly paid tribute to him. This took the form of money, cattle, goats, chickens, or working in his cultivated land. In this way Matamula became well-to-do and his hold over the locals was absolute as they were in mortal fear of him.

After twelve months hunting, the results my Game Scouts and I had to show were good. We had accounted for eight man-eatering lions. With these results some of the locals began to realise that the lions were not the indestructible monsters they had come to believe they were. They began to lose some of their fear of Matamula.

Matamula, like all witch-doctors, was a shrewd and cunning individual. He realised that my Game Scouts and I would eventually destroy all the lions, as I had promised to do in several open *barazas*. He began

a campaign to regain his lost headmanship of Iyayi Village. Matamula now made it known that if he were reinstated as headman he would call off the lions and all man-eating would cease. The villagers of Iyayi believed implicitly that if he were made headman again he would stop the man-eating lions.

Two or three months later the villagers went in a deputation to Sub-Chief Jifike at Wangingombe. They demanded that he should remove Ulaya as headman of Iyayi Village and appoint Matamula in his stead. Sub-Chief Jifike refused to have anything to do with the matter. He told the deputation that if they were dissatisfied with his decision they could appeal to the Paramount Chief. The deputation went therefore to Mdandu, the tribal headquarters, and put their plea to the Paramount Chief.

It so happened that just at this time the District Commissioner, who was in charge of Njombe District, was transferred to another part of the territory. There was a delay of ten days before the relieving District Commissioner arrived to take over the district. On taking over it generally takes a few months for a new District Commissioner to get to know his district and some of its problems.

It was during this period, when there was no District Commissioner, that the Paramount Chief agreed to the deputations' demands. He deposed Ulaya and reinstated Matamula as headman of Iyayi Village. This took place in June 1947 and on the fifteenth of the following month the last of the Njombe man-eaters was killed. There were no further deaths from lions and the years of terror were over. In the eyes of the villagers of Iyayi and the surrounding hamlets this proved the truth of Matamula's promise.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Hunting the Njombe Man-eaters

During my first visit to Njombe District most of the time was spent touring the area in which the man-eaters operated. This was done so that I could get a first-hand picture of the situation and work out a plan of campaign. During most of the nights I travelled the roads and tracks in my truck hoping to pick up the lions in the headlights. I also hunted on foot but found no fresh spoor.

There were two Game Scouts stationed in the southern part and one in the eastern part of the district. The nearest one was seventy-five miles away from the lion area and the furthest over one hundred miles and they were cut off from each other during the rainy season. All three Game Scouts were occupied in protecting native cultivation from marauding elephants. From time to time the District Commissioner sent them to deal with the lions but without success. Armed African police constables in twos and threes had been sent as well but they also failed to account for any lion. This is not surprising to anyone who has experienced the cunningness of man-eating lions. What was surprising was that the locals had not killed any of the man-eaters. There were a few shot-guns and many muzzle-loading guns amongst the people and nearly all the men had spears. Over the years opportunities must have arisen for some African armed with a muzzle loader to have blasted at least one lion.

On returning to my headquarters after the first visit I realised that the task of cleaning up the man-eaters was going to be a long and difficult one. I sent off telegrams calling in as many Game Scouts as I thought could be spared from the other districts in the Range. Another telegram was sent to the Game Warden asking for as many trap guns as he could let me have, and I converted a few worn out rifles into trap guns. The task was not made any easier by the fact that there was other important work in the Range which required constant attention. These other duties were a source of irritation as they prevented me from concentrating entirely on the lions.

I was unable to visit Njombe District again until mid-January 1946. I took with me six African Game Scouts, two were stationed at Wangingombe and two at a hamlet near Jumbe Musa. Working together the other two were to be constantly on the move, their movements guided by information received on killings. Widely spaced throughout the area some twenty gun trap bomas were built. The bomas were circular, about six feet in diameter and made of strong bush poles some five or six inches thick sunk deepily into the ground. They were strongly built, roofed in with poles with the roof and sides well covered with thorn branches. There was a narrow, low entrance some eleven to twelve inches wide and this was kept clear of thorns. Over the centre of the entrance the trap gun with its short barrel was fastened in a vertical position with the muzzle pointing downwards. A cord was attached to the trigger then passed over a horizontal piece of smooth round wood above the gun and pegged down firmly into the ground in the centre of the entrance. An animal attempting to enter the boma would press against the cord with its nose causing the lightly set gun to fire. The gun was positioned so that the bullet would enter the top of the animal's head. The Tanganyika Game Department had found this form of trap the most effective of all for use against stock-raiding lions and leopards. Six of these traps were in a constant state of readiness in different parts of the area. The bait used was usually a goat well tethered inside the boma. For over six months the traps were in constant readiness with all kinds of bait; meat, live goats and dogs and human remains recovered from killings. On a number of occasions a Game Scout or myself would spend a night in one, with the bait outside the entrance, but to no avail. The traps did not account for one lion.

My first two safaris lasted about three weeks each and they proved unsuccessful. This strengthened local opinion that I was wasting my time hunting the lions. In fact quite a few people told me so.

I tried every trick in the pack but with no results. The gun traps were baited and set, the Game Scouts stationed in the worst areas were hunting and I was also hunting. I soon gave up sitting in machans as it was far too cold. At night time a bitterly cold wind blew across the plateau and, no matter how warmly clad, by midnight I was shivering so badly I had to give up.

For this reason I used the pit method instead. The pits were about three feet deep by three feet wide by four feet long. A piece of tarpaulin was placed over the pit and pegged down to the ground on three sides. On a four-foot side the tarpaulin was raised so as to give a small opening. It faced away from the prevailing wind, a box was used to sit on and the rifle lay on the ground so that it could quickly be brought into action.

A live bait or human remains were placed some ten feet from the opening and I could sit there all night keeping fairly snug. Another advantage the pit method had was that no matter how dark it was outside it was darker inside. In this way it was always possible to see a little outside and on bright starlit nights, or with a moon, visibility was quite good but it was necessary to use a special torch for the actual shooting.

All I had to show for this sitting-up method was two hyenas, one leopard, one jackal, and one goat which was not the bait. My experience of shooting overkills or live bait has shown me that it is not advisable to waste time looking over the animal before shooting. It is best to get on to the mark as quickly as possible and press the trigger. If a head torch is used with the wiring arranged so that the switch is on the rifle near the right thumb one can be very fast indeed. When waiting for the kind of animals I was waiting for there is a feeling of tenseness at the slightest sound or movement. It is better to shoot fast and straight then move the beam of the torch over the animal to take a more careful look. Seeing that the 'sitting-up' method was giving no better results than it did for Mr. Wagner at Kidugalo I gave it up.

The hunting of the lions was made much more difficult because of

their habits. A normal lion will generally do its hunting and travelling in the evening or at night. They seldom travel far during the day, particularly if the sun is strong, and spend most of the day in some shady hideout sleeping and resting. Sometimes they drag or carry the remains of a kill to such a spot so that they may protect it from scavengers.

The mode of life of these man-eaters was entirely different. They generally made their kill in the evening and then spent the rest of the night feeding and resting. Before dawn they moved away and travelled hard all day. The spooring in most parts of the area was extremely difficult owing to the hard ground. Often when the spoor was given up owing to failing light the lions were as far ahead as they were at the beginning of the hunt and in some cases they had gained ground. By the time news was received of a killing, possibly brought by a passing lorry, morning would often be well advanced.

My next move was to get to the kill as quickly as possible and then follow the spoor for some distance. In this way I judged from the direction they were travelling which village they were heading for. I then went by truck to that village and in the afternoon until dark hunted out in the direction from which the lions were expected. This method was not as successful as I had hoped because very often the lions changed direction and headed for some other village. To make matters more difficult the lions operated in three and sometimes four prides. These prides did not keep to their own hunting areas as do normal lions and they often joined forces then split up again. A single lion often travelled and hunted alone.

The natives owned a considerable number of domestic stock, mainly cattle, but the lions showed no interest in them at all. The open cattle bomas were very primitive affairs, with walls waist to shoulder high and made of brush through which a cow could have pushed its way fairly easily. The cattle showed little fear of the lions and seldom stampeded because of them. There were several cases of lions going into cattle herds in daytime and taking herd boys. On one occasion they took a herd boy off the back of a cow on which he was riding without harming the cow in any way. Twice while following lions' spoor I came on the carcases of wild pigs they had killed. It seemed that they had killed the pigs for amusement since none of the flesh was eaten

although one of the pigs had been disembowelled with the swipe of a paw.

My third safari to Njombe District gave me my first success. Picking up two Game Scouts, Fungamali and Alfani, at Wangingombe I placed them at Jumbe Musa's where many killings were taking place. With the two of them I hunted hard through the area for three days but with no luck. Leaving the two scouts to continue hunting, I moved camp to Mambego Village, some fifty miles away by road. Killings were taking place in the area and the next morning, with three locals to help with the spooring, I hunted out to the south in the direction of Kidugalo.

About 10 a.m. we cut fresh lion spoor which we followed. The spoor was heading towards Kidugalo and followed a small tributary of the Mbarali River. Around noon we caught up with the lions and I counted four. In spite of local belief to the contrary they appeared to me to be ordinary, well-fed lions. I was using a very fine double-barrelled ejector 9·3 mm. magnum rifle made in Germany. The rifle was deadly accurate in both barrels, hard hitting, well balanced, fast to use and light enough to be carried all day.

Going on one knee I took careful aim at the one offering the easiest shot, a three quarter grown lioness. I fired, breaking her right upper foreleg or shoulder and the usual pandemonium broke loose from the wounded lioness. The other lions started to move into cover. Normally I would have taken a shot at one of the others with the second barrel but in view of all the witchcraft involved I was determined there would be no mistake over the first one. She was growling and rampaging around in small circles trying to bite her wound. I gave her the second barrel which killed her and immediately put two more shots into her for good measure.

Having no intention of allowing the dead lioness out of my sight I did not follow up the others. She was in perfect condition, with a coat glossier and more luxuriant than that of an ordinary lion. The expressions on the faces of the three men who were with me are hard to describe. They were of incredibility and fear and I think they were expecting the dead lion to take on the form of a dead man. I sent off two of the men to call the people of a nearby small village to come and see the lion. The man who stayed behind sat close to me and was silent.

Within half an hour the whole population of the village arrived, men, women and children but they were all strangely quiet. After a while I asked the men to skin the lion but no one would touch it so I had to skin it myself. I also cut off the skull. The people had no objection to touching and handling the skin once it was off the animal, or the skull either. The next day I left for Wangingombe where I left the skin with Sub-Chief Jifike who displayed it in the Native Court House. Jifike was very pleased at the killing of this first lion.

Continuing on to Jumbe Musa where I had left the two Game Scouts I made camp. We hunted the region thoroughly, and on the third day we got up to a pride of lions but only one could be seen. We all fired at the lion and it fell dead with three bullets in its body. The death of this lion, coming so shortly after the first, caused some jubilation and many of the people had a changed outlook on the lion problem. I told them there was nothing to be jubilant about as there were still a number of man-eating lions left and they would cause a lot of deaths before they were all accounted for. On this they agreed, but said that what they were happy about was that I had shown them the lions were not invulnerable.

I had to return to my headquarters in Mbeya to arrange for the wages of the men on the game-free area and attend to other Range matters. Due to one of those frustrating hold-ups that seemed to bedevil my efforts to hunt down the man-eaters, it was six weeks before I could go back. Making a hurried tour of inspection in the game-free area I found one of the three European game observers seriously ill. The sick man, a Mr. Chitty, was in charge of the western section with his base camp near Abercorn. He was brought into Mbeya where the disease was diagnosed as cancer of the bladder and he was flown down to Dar-es-Salaam hospital where he died. A replacement had to be found for Mr. Chitty and that was not easy, as suitable men were scarce. Mr. Chitty's affairs had to be wound up, the new man installed and given instruction on his duties. Safaris also had to be made to Lake Rukwa and other parts of the Range.

On reaching Njombe District towards the end of March I found that Game Scout Alfani had, on his own, succeeded in killing a man-eater near to Kidugalo. The fact that an African Game Scout had killed a man-eater without any subsequent ill effects was good news indeed.

The other Game Scouts, who had been a little apprehensive, had much more confidence; also, we were three lions up. With the two scouts I hunted out from Jumbe Musa's Village for three long days without success. Moving to Wangingombe we hunted there for two days, also without luck.

Leaving the scouts at Wangingombe I decided to go to Njombe to report progress to the District Commissioner. There were two motor roads to Njombe both of which turned off the Great North Road. Travelling in my truck along the eastern road I stopped at all hamlets and villages along the way to ask for news of the lions. Near to Ihanyawa Village there was a small hamlet of five huts. Taking my rifle with me, the usual and advisable thing to do, I walked over to the huts.

I found the women standing close to their huts with the doors half closed and the children inside. Three men, two of them armed with muzzle loading guns and one with two spears, were looking across a cultivated shallow depression. I asked them what was wrong and one man said that about half an hour earlier he was starting off to work in the cultivated lands when he saw a lion on the other side of the depression. He gave the alarm but he did not know if the lion had moved off or was lying hidden near where he first saw it.

The youngest man with the spears reluctantly agreed to go with me to look for the lion. The other two said they would stay behind in case I missed the lion and if that happened it might come to the huts. It was about 8 a.m. and on the far side of the cultivated area I picked up the fresh spoor of a single lion. We followed, and after about half an hour the young man with me gained more confidence and was of much greater help in working out the spoor.

After about two hours of spooring we saw the lion some fifty yards ahead, crossing a flat shallow depression known as a mbuga. The mbuga was covered with short grass, clear of trees and scrub and the lion was moving steadily, keeping to a straight line. I would not take a stern shot but decided to follow hoping for the offer of a better shot later. A few yards further on we came to a sheer bank with about a four-foot drop, the exposed side and top of loose quartz rubble and gravel. I was able to get down the bank silently but the man following me slipped and dislodged a small avalanche of rubble.

I kept my eyes on the lion who turned his head at the sound, and on

seeing us whipped round quickly to face us. My rifle came up and I fired, but just as I was pressing the trigger he started his charge. This caused my first barrel to go just over and the bullet kicked up a puff of dust beyond him. He was a young male with a short, reddish mane and his charge was a full-blooded effort, with the mane hairs standing on end as if electrified. To me he seemed all mane, teeth and claws with the tail cocked up stiffly at about forty-five degrees and whirling around.

The recoil from the double-barrelled 9·3 mm. magnum I was using was not at all heavy. All the same, by the time I had brought the rifle to bear and pressed the trigger he was only about ten yards from me. Fortunately my bullet found the brain. I do not know what the speed of charging lions is but I think it took the lion not more than three seconds to cover the forty to fifty yards. Had I been using a magazine rifle my second shot would have been a very hurried one indeed. Reloading my rifle I put a second shot into the lion just to make sure. The man who was with me had bolted. I must say I did not blame him for running away but after a lot of calling and hullooing he returned.

While I skinned the lion the man went off to the nearest huts a short distance away. He came back with a few men who carried the skin and skull to the motor road. After hunting in the region for three more days without success I returned to Mbeya. On arrival I learned that my sea passage had been booked to England for overseas leave. In some ways I was sorry about this as a good start had been made on the man-eaters and four had been killed. However, our two eldest children were in England staying with my mother and owing to the war my wife and I had not seen them for over eight years.

The Game Department was short of European staff and I was instructed to hand over the Range to one of the game observers. This man, although reliable and conscientious, was not an experienced hunter and I was afraid that little progress with the man-eaters would be made in my absence.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The End of the Man-Eaters

Returning to Mbeya from overseas leave at the end of October 1946, I learned that one more man-eater had been killed in my absence. This was a single lion seen lying up close to a village near Mdandu, the Paramount Chief's headquarters. Three Africans, each armed with a muzzle loading gun, stalked the lion and, firing together, succeeded in killing the beast. Had it been a year earlier, before any of the man-eaters had been accounted for, it is doubtful if those men would have attempted to shoot the lion. This was definite proof that some of the people were beginning to lose their fear of the witchcraft surrounding the lions. The total number of man-eaters killed was now five.

Two months later a man living between the villages of Rujewa and Igawa was not so successful. One evening a lion dashed into the small hamlet, seized a woman and carried her off. Several other lions were there and taking the body into a nearby thicket they started to feed on her. The husband of the unfortunate woman ran to his hut. After loading his muzzle-loader he moved towards the thicket where the lions were feeding on his wife. On the way his courage began to fail him and he started trembling, nevertheless he continued towards the thicket. When he got close a large lioness broke cover with one of the woman's legs in its jaws. After going a few paces the lioness stopped

and turned to face him, giving him that cold baleful glare only the bigger cats can give. This unnerved the man so much that the trembling changed to shaking and he shook so badly that the percussion cap fell off the breech nipple of his muzzle-loader making it unusable. The lioness casually walked away with the woman's leg in its mouth.

The game observer who was in charge of the Range in my absence on leave, had previously discussed the lions with me on several occasions. Each time he had advocated using large numbers of armed Africans in organised drives. I was against the method for the following reasons. First, at that time the local people would not have turned out against the lions; secondly, the lions did not lie-up or rest during the day; thirdly, a large-scale organised drive sounds all right in theory. It may start off in orderly manner but in a very short time it becomes a disorderly rabble and if the beaters have firearms the danger is considerable.

On one of his two visits to Njombe District the game observer was able to make one of these organised drives. With the aid of the Native Authority's lorry and his own a number of local Africans were quickly collected. The Africans, most of them armed with muzzle loaders and a few with shot-guns, were placed in position. The game observer selected a strategic spot below a low bank, and it was perhaps as well that he did. The lions were surrounded and the battle started. After the smoke cleared and the noise died down, the count was: two Africans shot dead, several wounded, one of whom died later in hospital, the lions unscathed. The game observer told me he had to keep well down behind the bank for bullets were flying all over the place, some passing over where he lay.

I made a fairly comprehensive tour of the Range and the game-free area. It was not until December that a visit to Njombe District could be made. Going round the man-eater area I got a general picture of the situation. There was a small drop in the number of people being killed but the position was still serious. Taking Game Scout Alfani with me I went to Mambego Village and made camp by the motor road near the village.

Just before going on leave I sold my double-barrelled 9·3 mm. magnum rifle; I had to do that to pay off my store bills and have a few

pounds for the journey. On my return I tried to buy the rifle back, offering a good profit, but the purchaser would not part with it. The rifle I was now using was a Westley-Richards ·404 magazine with a long Mauser action. It was a fine and accurate rifle but I preferred the double 9·3 mm. magnum.

We hunted southward from Mambego Village towards the Mbarali River and its upper tributaries. On the third day out we cut the fresh spoor of a pride travelling north-westerly in the direction of Igawa. By noon we caught up with them and after a successful stalk were able to get into a good position. As prearranged, the scout took one lion and I took a second. My lion dropped to the shot but by the time I had reloated he was up again but went down and stayed down to my second shot.

The scout hit his lion with the first shot but missed with the second, and I heard the bullet whining away into the distance. It was a lioness and she was making quite a commotion, growling, biting, clawing the base of a nearby sapling. I gave her two fast shots which killed her. While I was reloading the scout got a glimpse of a third lion as it was moving away and he took a hurried snap shot. The scout hit the lion all right but it was not a crippling wound. We followed its spoor, together with that of two other lions, until late afternoon when we completely lost the spoor on hard ground.

On reaching camp I found a messenger waiting for me with a letter saying that a European, Bill Marshal, had been killed by an elephant just north of Iringa and would I go as soon as possible to investigate the affair. I left immediately and at the Malangali turn-off I learned that two days earlier a young Mhehe herdsman had speared and killed a lion single handed. The lion had attacked a herd of cattle and the courageous Mhehe youth running in from the side threw his spear and it penetrated the lion's heart.

With Police Officer E. G. Mackie I visited the spot where Marshal had been killed and we obtained all the necessary information. By the time the inquest was over, at which I had to give evidence, and taken other action as well, it was near the end of the year so I returned to my headquarters at Mbeya. The score at the end of 1946 was eight lions, seven of which were definitely man-eaters.

As with all Government departments there were the usual annual

reports, end-of-year returns and a large volume of paper work. This, together with the administrative work of the game-free area, kept me busy throughout the whole of January. In February I went on safari to Njombe District and the Game Scouts told me they had killed two lions near Mawinde Village. Mawinde lay well to the west and far outside the area of the man-eaters so they were not counted. Better news was that Game Scout Jumapili had killed a man-eater at Mterengani to the west of Makombako. This brought the total up to eight man-eaters killed, plus three doubtful ones.

Receiving information that two or three people had been killed during the previous few days in the Ilembulu–Malimzenga region I made camp at Halali some ten miles went of there. The next morning I hunted to the east in the direction of Ilembulu and got back to camp about noon without seeing any signs of the lions. On arriving in camp I was told that about an hour after I had left that morning a small pride of lions had turned up at the village. They killed a man, dragged him some distance away and ate him and then moved on.

After drinking a hurried pot of tea, and accompanied by a man and a youth aged about sixteen years to help with the spooring, we set off after the lions. The youth was very good indeed, appeared to be quite unafraid and I learned later that he was a son of the man who had been killed. We made good progress along the spoor and around 3 p.m. we came to a large block of dense secondary growth of brachystegia-combretum. It had once been cultivated land but abandoned several years previously.

We entered this bush, with the youth in front following the spoor and holding his spear at the ready. I followed close on his heels with my rifle fully cocked and keeping a look-out ahead as well as I could. We moved slowly and silently and after going some fifty yards through the thicket we heard a slight movement ahead. We stopped and listened carefully then heard the movement again. It could of course have been a small game animal or a game bird. By signs I told the man who was with us to stay where he was or go back. Taking the lead I went along the spoor slowly on my hands and knees. Visibility was better at ground level and after crawling some twenty yards I saw a young lioness. She was lying on her stomach with her forelegs stretched

out in front of her, three quarters facing me about seven yards away. As I saw her she saw me but whether it was because she had recently fed, or because of surprise, she made no move. With one smooth, unhurried movement I brought up the rifle and shot her through the brain killing her instantly.

I reloaded immediately and stood up. There was some scurrying movement ahead and about fifteen yards to my right front a big lioness took a long, high bound at right angles to me. I took a hurried shot at her, shooting shot-gun fashion, and hit her hard but a little too far back to be fatal. All hell was let loose. There was a terrific commotion as she rampaged around tearing at the surrounding bush, grunting and growling at the same time.

Refilling the rifle magazine I sat on the ground and waited. There were at least two other lions somewhere nearby but the youth was still with me and had not budged an inch. After about fifteen minutes the noise from the wounded lioness subsided, for a further ten minutes there was an occasional grunt and then dead silence. I considered going back to camp to return the next day when we might have found her dead, but I gave up the idea for I did not know whether she was badly wounded or not. To ease the tension I lit my pipe and sat smoking, at the same time giving the wounded lioness time to cool off.

Later, leaving the youth where he was I went after the wounded man-eater. Using the utmost care and caution I moved slowly towards where the lioness had been making a commotion. About half-way I heard a slight movement in front which made me tense. A few more silent steps forward and suddenly there was a nasty grunting growl a few feet away.

I turned in the direction of the growl with the cocked rifle ready to fire from the hip. Although in moments of great emergency one's reflexes act at great speed the brain works even faster. I realised that no matter how fast I whipped round and fired, the lion—being so near and having the advantage—would be on me before I could fire. The lion had me completely at its mercy, but instead of making the short spring from behind the dense bush which had hidden him he made off. I got a glimpse of him, a big male with a golden-brown mane. The man-eater failed to take the chance offered him and some four months

later we met again. On that occasion the chance was offered to me and I took it.

After softly calling up the youth I sat down, filled my pipe again and smoked it slowly to allow myself to cool off. Having done this we moved towards where we had heard the lioness, the youth at my heels' his spear poised at the ready. On reaching the spot we saw, apart from the clawed up earth, a fairly heavy pool of blood where she had been lying.

We continued slowly on her spoor and about forty yards further on, in more open country, I saw her. She was facing us in a half crouched position but whether she had a charge left in her I do not know. Probably she had because the vitality of the large cats is incredible, but she did not have the chance for I put two rounds into her very quickly and killed her. The youth was still with me and said he was carrying his father's spear and could he spear the lion with it. Realising what this meant to the youth I replied 'Yes, but you must do it quickly as the lion is not yet dead.' He drove the spear two or three times into the dead lioness. We then went back to the first dead lioness and the youth thrust his spear into that also. It was, I suppose, some way of avenging his father's death.

The sun was now getting low in the sky so we returned to camp. On the way we picked up the other man who had most sensibly got clear of the thicket and climbed a suitable tall tree. Early next morning a party of men and myself went out to the dead lions. The men stayed behind to skin the lions and carry the skins back to camp whilst I continued on yesterday's spoor. With me were the man and the youth who had helped with the hunting the previous day. We followed the spoor until well after mid-day and then gave up as there appeared to be little hope of catching up with the lions.

During the months of March and April I was occupied with crop protection against raiding elephants. It is during these months in that part of Tanganyika that main food crops of the native cultivators mature and begin to ripen. In the worst areas elephants could and did cause local famines.

I visited Wangingombe in the second half of June and after making camp the sub-chief, Jifike, came and greeted me with great cordiality.

He told me that ten days earlier Game Scout Jumapili had killed a lion a few miles away. This made the score eleven man-eaters killed. He said also that the number of killings were fewer and he did not think there were more than two or three man-eaters left. After going round the whole region I found that the remaining man-eaters were operating within a fifteen-mile radius of Jumbe Musa's village so I concentrated all the Game Scouts in that area and camped at Jumbe Musa's myself.

Hunting out from there with Jumapili we worked hard but it was not until the ninth day that we had any luck. On that day at about 7.30 a.m. we picked up the fresh spoor of two lions and followed, getting up to them three hours later. We came on them suddenly and opened fire almost immediately. Jumapili took the lioness whilst I took the lion and we killed them both. The male was the lion which had given me a bad fright a few months earlier. The score was now thirteen man-eaters killed and I thought we had accounted for the last of them.

After informing the District Commissioner Njombe that I felt sure the man-eating was at an end I left for Mbeya. On the way I stopped at Chimala to see a Head Game Scout stationed there. He had a number of things to report, one being that he and another Game Scout had succeeded in killing two lions near the Great North Road between Chimala and Igawa. Seeing that the place where the lions were killed was twenty miles east of the perimeter of the man-eater area they were considered ordinary lions. The District Commissioner was greatly relieved when I told him I thought we had accounted for all the man-eaters, but I was wrong. Twelve days later I received a telegram from him saying that a woman had been killed and eaten at Matipu Village

When I reached the place I learned that three Game Scouts hunting together had killed two lioness on July 15, 1946 at Sindagosi Village which is near Matipu. The total number of man-eaters killed now stood at fifteen. I felt that surely these two must be the last of the man-eaters. They were. The reign of terror was over.

There is no doubt that most of these lions were born and brought up to man-eating. This being so their diet was almost entirely one of human flesh. It is possible that it was because of their diet they differed slightly in appearance to ordinary lions. They were rather undersized and their coats were much glossier and luxuriant than those of lean,

hard-working game-hunting lions. Towards the end, when their numbers had been reduced and most of the mature lions killed, those remaining became disorganised.

The methods they used when making their kills remained the same up to the end. In most villages there is much activity in the late afternoons and early evening. The women are busy cooking the main meal of the day, the men sit in small groups gossiping, the children shout and play some final game. At sundown the families usually retired to their huts. It was at this time of day that the lions struck. A pride stalked a village and got as close as possible without ever leaving thick cover. One or two of the pride made the final stalk, taking advantage of every bit of cover to get as close as possible to the village. Then came the swift dash into the village and if two lions made the final dash sometimes two persons would be struck down. The body was dragged or carried from the village. The other lions took turns and worked in relays and carried the body up to a mile away.

When the victim was a child they consumed the whole body, including bones but strangely enough the saucer-like top of the skull was often left, licked quite clean.

Towards the end I began to hate the man-eaters with a deep hatred and in some way the task of hunting them down became a personal matter. This attitude of mind probably started after the lions had killed and eaten a young girl at Mambego's village. She was ten or eleven years old, a most friendly little creature, and she used to sit and chatter to me at length when I camped there. She always brought a few eggs or maize cobs as a gift and usually I had a few sweets and salt for her as a return gift.